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Chloe & Chenelle

"Diane Guerrero has such a strong voice in the community, and we wanted to capture that," say the Delgadillo sisters, our 20Q stylists. "The Statue of Liberty served as our muse. We played with colors and shapes to make her feel and look powerful." Despite schedules overflowing with album covers, marketing campaigns and music videos, they're no strangers to our sets, having dressed a handful of our feature subjects this year, from BDSM role-players to King Princess.

Neryl Walker

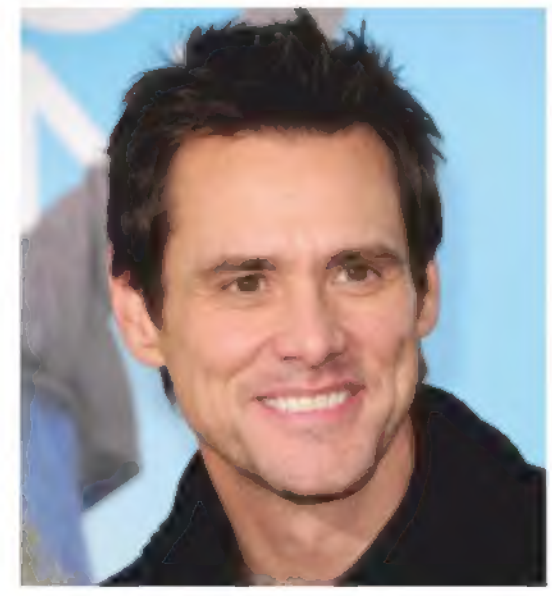
In fall 2018, playboy creative director Erica Loewy e-mailed Walker with a challenge: Reimagine LeRoy Neiman's famous Femlin, the first iteration of which appeared in our Party Jokes page in 1955. "I love the fact that playboy asked a woman to reinterpret the Femlin. It's about women owning their sexuality rather than being objectified by it," the Australian artist tells us. "The Femlin is fun, cheeky, sassy and confident." Walker's spritely creations have appeared in every issue since.

Elizabeth Suman

The playboy senior editor focuses her editorial curation on the arts, whether articulated in spray paint or pubic hair. This issue, she introduces Hank Willis Thomas (The Art of Attention), inaugurates a new contributing cartoonist (Jim Carrey) and presents JR (Portraits for the People). "playboy has always been a platform for creatives to express themselves with freedom," she says. "I hope to continue that legacy."

Jim Carrey

For playboy's Equality Issue, our new contributing cartoonist chose to honor the late civil rights activist and public servant Elijah Cummings with an illustration titled For Goodness Sake. "I drew Elijah Cummings because he stood for love, fairness and truth. He embodied what is left of our endangered moral conscience," says the award-winning actor. Carrey will soon return to season two of Kidding and release his semi-autobiographical novel, Memoirs and Misinformation.



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ON THE COVER
KELSEY FRANCES
Photography by Jeston Brandon
No 28 | **April 2020**

"Baby, it's really cold outside."

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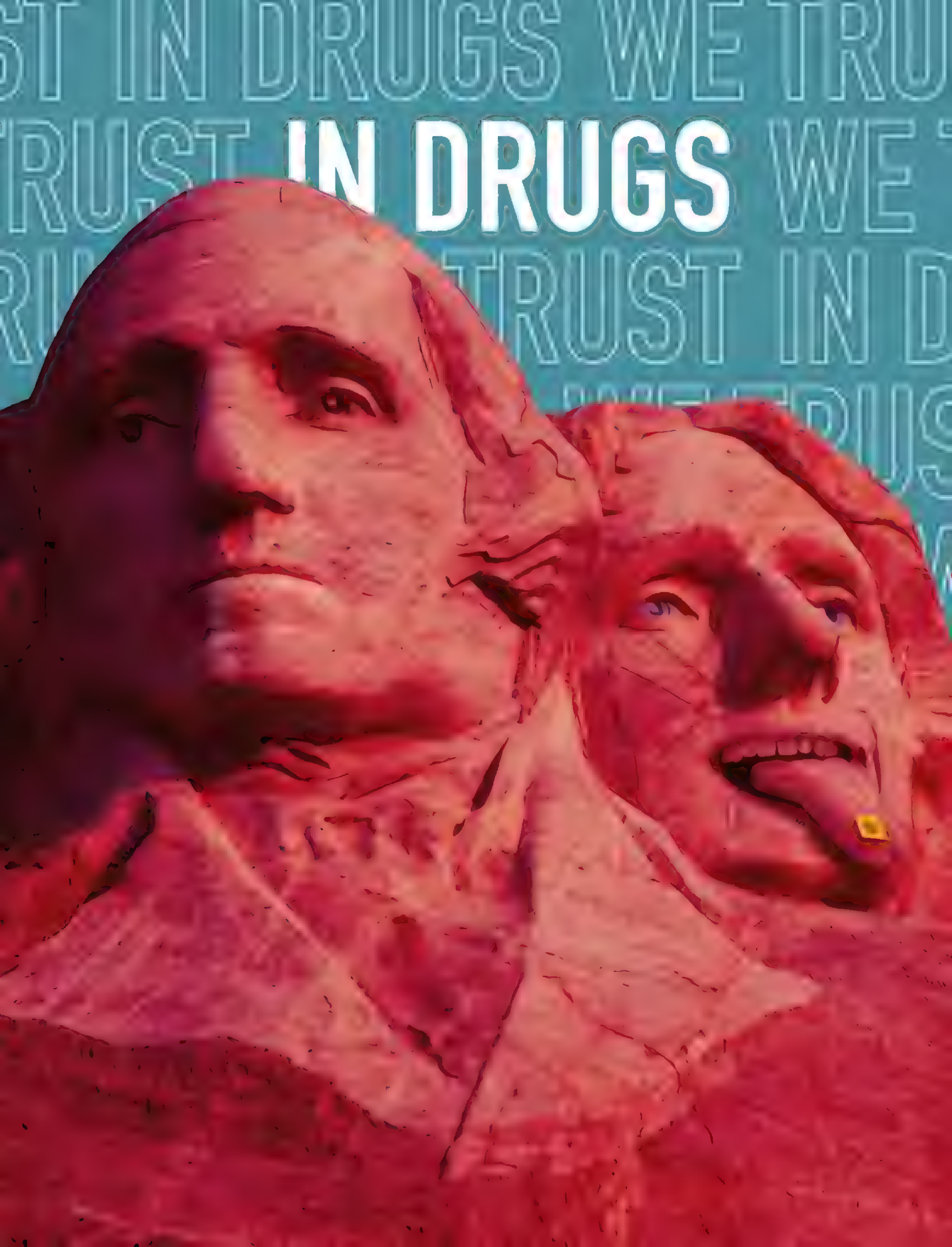
playboy • *n.* a wealth
his time enjoying hi

player • *n.* **1** a person
sport or game **2** a per

IN DRUGS WE TRUST



WE TRUST

The drug policies in this country are preposterous. As long as people who use drugs are treated like criminals, mass criminalization and mass overdose deaths will remain two of the greatest ongoing tragedies in the United States.

Accidental drug overdoses are the leading cause of death for Americans under the age of 50, exceeding fatalities from gun violence, car accidents, homicide and HIV/AIDS. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, more than 68,000 deadly drug overdoses occurred in the United States in 2018 alone.

At the same time, U.S. law enforcement makes an arrest for drug possession every 25 seconds, adding up to well over 1 million arrests a year. It's the single most common reason for arrest in the country. These arrests do nothing to reduce the use of drugs; in fact, criminalization amplifies safety risks by pushing people who use drugs away from public health services.

What if I told you that decriminalization of all drugs (yes, all drugs) could put an end to that? Under decriminalization, people who are caught using or possessing a small amount of drugs or are found with drug paraphernalia would no longer face criminal penalties, meaning any form of criminal punishment (including arrest, jail and imprisonment) would be abolished.

This idea — to cease to treat drug possession as an unlawful offense — isn't as outlandish as it may seem. According to a poll conducted by the Cato Institute, 55 percent of Americans support decriminalization. The leading governmental, medical, public health and civil rights groups — including the American Civil Liberties Union and the Global Commission on Drug Policy, plus celebrity activists such as Richard Branson — have also supported decriminalization, arguing that drug-policy reformation would revolutionize how the U.S. handles use and addiction.

Decriminalization has proven to be transformative in other nations across the world. Numerous countries, including the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Spain and, most notably, Portugal, have had remarkable success with it.

The Portuguese regime, established by António Salazar in 1932, closed the country off from the rest of the world for 40 years. When the suppressive rule abruptly ended in 1974, in came the drugs the country had barely experienced before. By the 1990s, one in 100 people in Portugal was addicted to heroin, and the country's rate of HIV infection had hit the highest in the European Union. But since 2001, when Portugal became the first country to decriminalize all drugs, the number of people voluntarily entering treatment has increased significantly as rates of addiction and adolescent drug use have fallen. From 2000 to 2015, HIV infections in Portugal plummeted from 104.2 new cases per million to 4.2 cases per million.

Given decriminalization's successful track record, senior levels of government are attempting to pave the way for it in an array of countries, including Canada, Ghana, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway and Scotland. Still, only a handful of U.S. policy makers have embraced the idea.

Some progress has been made in reforming the war on drugs in the United States — but mostly by cities and states, not by the federal government. Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Oklahoma, Oregon and Utah have reduced drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor. Dozens of cities around the country have instituted pre-arrest diversion programs, such as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion. "911 Good Samaritan" laws, some of which limit criminalization at the scene of an overdose for witnesses who call for emergency medical assistance, have been adopted in all 50 states.

Progress has also been made toward cannabis legalization in all 50 states, giving hope that once-unthinkable drug reforms can happen with positive results. Since Colorado, Washington, Alaska, Oregon, Washington, D.C., California, Massachusetts, Maine, Nevada, Michigan, Illinois and Vermont approved measures to legalize cannabis, states have saved millions and are allocating the dollars earned from cannabis taxes to civil sectors. In Colorado, for instance, $225 million in tax revenue was distributed to the Colorado Department of Education from 2015 to 2018. A study published in the journal Economic Inquiry shows compelling evidence that opioid-overdose deaths in states that have legalized recreational cannabis drop by 20 to 35 percent.

The national debate around cannabis has evolved from whether the remaining states should legalize it to how they should legalize it. But even though a 2018 Rasmussen Reports survey found that only nine percent of likely U.S. voters deem the war on drugs a success — and despite positive case studies ranging from Portugal's decriminalization to cannabis legalization stateside — the Trump administration is making moves to ramp

up the drug war. This marks a shift away from modest Obamaera reforms that slowed the growth of mass incarceration. Trump and his ilk have weaponized the overdose crisis in an attempt to demonize immigrants and people of color — even calling for the death penalty for people who sell drugs.

U.S. voters may soon decide on drug decriminalization for the first time: In September 2019, activists in Oregon filed Petition 2020-044, which will likely come to a vote in November 2020. If passed, it will decriminalize simple possession and refer offenders to a range of voluntary services such as evidence-based treatment, harm-reduction programs and housing services. The savings on law enforcement — as well as the revenue from cannabis taxes — would fund these programs.

Some Democratic presidential candidates, such as Bernie Sanders, include far-reaching drug-policy reforms in their platforms. "We are going to end the international embarrassment of having more people in jail than any other country on earth. Instead of spending $80 billion a year on jails and incarceration, we are going to invest in jobs and education for our young people," Sanders promises on his campaign website. Yet as of press time no 2020 presidential candidate has made a full-throated endorsement of ending arrests for drug possession and implementing Portugal-style decriminalization.

• • •

So what would the United States look like if we stopped treating drug users as criminals? Mass incarceration and mass criminalization — which are major drivers of economic inequality, health disparities and systemic racism — would decrease significantly. The criminalization that targets lower-income communities would slowly wither, affording those affected an opportunity to support themselves and their families.

We would no longer fear years like 2018, when law enforcement arrested about 1.43 million people for possessing small amounts of drugs for personal use. The American Civil Liberties Union and Human Rights Watch could work on releasing the 137,000 people they estimate are behind bars in U.S. prisons and jails on any given day for drug possession — many of them being held pre-trial because they can't afford to post bail. Thousands more currently locked up for failing drug tests as a condition of probation or parole could start working toward their freedom.

Black people, who represent 13 percent of the U.S. population and use drugs at similar rates as other groups, would no longer account for 29 percent of people arrested for drug-law violations and 33 percent of people incarcerated in state prisons for drug possession. Law enforcement would be able to divert resources to serious public safety concerns — such as the 67 percent of reported rapes that went uncleared in 2018 and the thousands of rape kits that went unprocessed.

If mass drug-possession arrests stop in the U.S., the thousands of people currently deported every year for possessing any amount of drugs would no longer fear losing their homes. Permanent residents — many of whom have been in the U.S. for decades and have jobs and families — would no longer live with the anxiety caused by the automatic detention and deportation, often without the possibility of return, for being caught with any amount of any drug.

One may hypothesize that fewer drug-possession arrests would mean more crime on the streets, but the Pew Charitable Trusts reported in 2017 that there is "no relationship between drug imprisonment and drug problems," because under decriminalization, people would still be arrested for committing crimes under the influence of drugs. Decriminalization would only mean that police could no longer waste taxpayer dollars arresting people for possession.

Decriminalization also makes it easier to ramp up health and harm-reduction services that are known to drastically reduce addiction, overdose deaths and new hepatitis C and HIV infections. Evidence-based drug treatment could more easily be offered to anyone who wants it. For those who continue to use drugs, services to reduce potential harm —such as screening unregulated drugs for adulterants, community-based naloxone distribution, syringe-access programs, supervised consumption sites and other long-proven approaches — could also be made more widely available.

All the pieces are in place for drug decriminalization to take effect in the U.S. Now we just have to demand that our leaders act. To truly end the war on drugs and avoid new public health crises, we need to accept that criminalizing possession offers no solutions or hope for real cultural transformation. ■

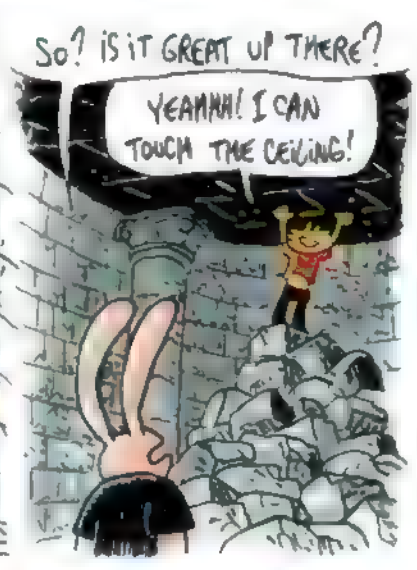
A PASTORAL ADVENTURE OF LAPINOT AND RICHARD

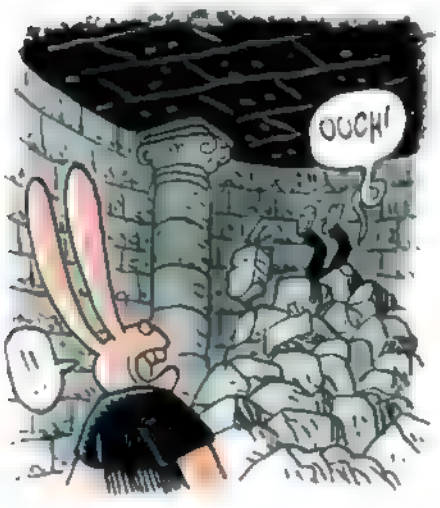
Countrysidekick

BY LEWIS TRONDHEIM

SO, THE LORD OF THE MANOR AND HIS FAMILY WERE ALL KILLED BY A DISGRUNTLED FARMER NAMED JEAN GROLLET
THE FARMER WAS HUGE, OVER TWO METERS TALL. HE WAS NEVER FOUND.
ANOTHER UNSOLVED MYSTERY FROM THE MIDDLE AGES !!!

LET'S SEE... ACCORDING TO THE WEATHER REPORT, IT'S GOING TO POUR FOR AN HOUR.
WELL THEN... LET'S EXPLORE THIS VIRGIN LAND, FREE OF TOURISTS FOR AT LEAST... 24 HOURS...





HA HA HA!
THE FIRST ONE TO FIND SOMETHING GETS TO KEEP IT!
WOO HOO! ALL RIGHT!
HEY, WAIT!
WHAT DO YOU SEE?
NOTHING JUST YET, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING...
I FEEL IT ...
IT JUST LOOKS LIKE A ROTTEN OLD CELLAR.
HOLD ON... WAIT... SOMETHING SPECTACULAR WILL HAPPEN.
YOU KNOW, WE'VE HAD A LOOK AROUND. UNLIKE MOVIES, REAL LIFE ISN'T SCRIPTED BY ANYONE.
MMM...
REAL LIFE STINKS ...
NOW, HOLD ON...
YOU FOUND A MOMENT OF PURE HAPPINESS HERE. THAT'S THE REAL PRIZE.
PFFT...
THERE COULD HAVE BEEN A CRYPT ...
A TREASURE ...
GHOSTS ...
BUT NO!!! NOTHING AT ALL!
BETWEEN YOU AND ME, IT'S POSSIBLE WE ENCOUNTERED OTHERWORLDLY ENTITIES...
OH, REALLY? COOL! TELL ME!
THE SAME MICROSCOPIC FUNGI THAT GAVE HORRIBLE LUNG INFECTIONS TO THOSE WHO DISCOVERED TUTANKHAMEN ... AND WE'LL DIE TWO WEEKS FROM NOW ...

- End of chapter one - KRISTROFFER

VIVIANE LEIGH

Photography by **CASSANDRA KEYES**

"I'm a fun-loving girl," says the beautiful Playboy Muse, Viviane Leigh. On location in sunny Mexico, this Australian beauty is thoroughly enjoying her time in a new country shooting with the photographer, Cassandra Keyes. "The second set I shot was in a cactus garden. I was once again, exploring the beautiful Mexican countryside," she gushes. Dressed in a bright coral dress, boots, and a safari hat, Viviane walks through the stunning greenery surrounding her as the camera snaps away. "I first heard about Playboy when I was a young girl," says Viviane. "I always admired the beautiful, classy, and strong women on the cover. I dreamt that one day I could be a Playboy model — it's surreal that it has come true!" Thrilled to be right where she is, Viviane enjoys posing nude. "It's so liberating and empowering; I love feeling natural in my own skin," she says. "Playboy makes me feel beautiful and confident about my body. My body might not be perfect, but I love it!"

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Diane
Guerrero
20Q

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **KELIA ANNE**

What makes a superhero? A voice, a cause and a will to change the world. The actress-activist, who headlines the HBO Max premiere of DC's **Doom Patrol**, has all three and isn't backing down

BY **SAMANTA HELOU HERNANDEZ**

Q1: *Orange Is the New Black gave you your most notable role to date — Maritza Ramos, one of Litchfield Penitentiary's original inmates. On the show's final season, which debuted on Netflix in July, Ramos is deported to Colombia, mirroring what happened to your parents nearly two decades ago, when you were 14 years old. How did you prepare for those scenes?*

GUERRERO: I didn't have to look far to understand what it would be like for my character to be in jail once again, to be taken away. I know what that's like. My mom was taken in handcuffs to the airport and loaded up on a plane. It's something I've lived with my entire life. It's desperate; it's lonely. So I tried to go back to that time. Honestly, because of the work I'm doing today, I'm back there all the time. It was cathartic.

Q2: *So it wasn't retraumatizing?*

GUERRERO: No, no, no. What's retraumatizing is knowing that some fucking guy went to a Walmart and shot up people because he thought there was an invasion of Mexicans, because of what our president has said. That's retraumatizing. That instills fear in me that my life can be taken away at any time. Portraying it artistically, or even retelling my story, as hard as that is at times, is a means to an end. That's not retraumatizing.

Q3: *You revealed your parents' deportation in a 2014 op-ed piece in the Los Angeles Times, and in 2016 you released a memoir, In the Country We Love, about growing up in the U.S. without them. What motivated you to share your story and become an activist for immigration reform?*

GUERRERO: My career was moving very fast, but I felt I wasn't being honest. I felt deceitful not speaking about something that was very real to me. The issue of immigration was being tossed around inaccurately, and Trump was using the immigrant community as a scapegoat. What do you do when your community is flat-out labeled as rapists and murderers, and people run with that narrative? I couldn't offer a general response as a person of color, as a brown woman. I had to be like, "Yo, as a child of a separated family, as a child coming from a marginalized community that often experiences incarceration… I'm speaking to you as a child who lived all of this." I wanted people to look at me, see me and know what the fuck I'm about.

Q4: *How did you find a space to inhabit in this country?*

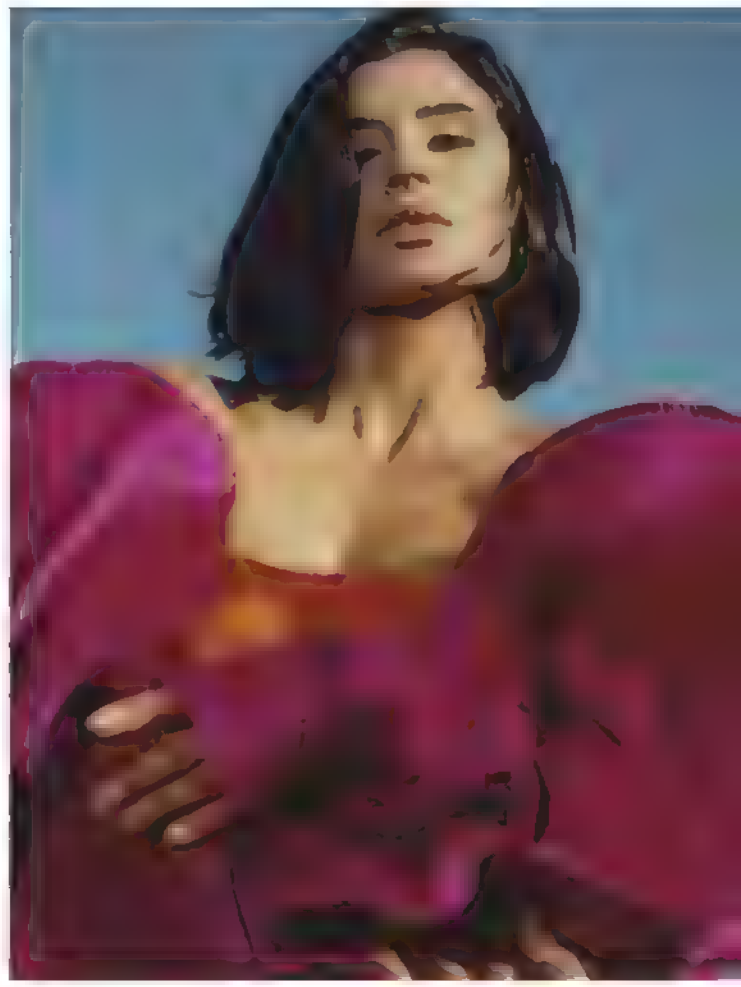
GUERRERO: If your circumstances bring you to a place where someone has to be charitable to you, you develop a habit of wanting to be invincible out of needing to appease folks. I got to the point of wanting to kill myself; that's how invincible I wanted to get. I had to see a therapist, who told me that it was okay to want things and to have dreams. I had to change the way I was programmed by reciting affirmations that I was worthy. That's how I began, little by little, to take up space again. But it's a work in progress. I work every day to not shrink myself, to allow myself to speak freely in places I'm scared to speak.

Q5: *In August you told Vanity Fair that you feared becoming a "poster child of deportation." Do you feel that you have?*

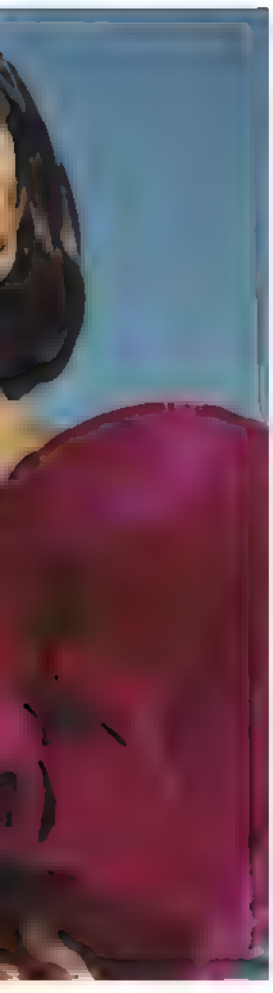
GUERRERO: No, I don't. I thought people were trying to pigeonhole me. In reality, only you can pigeonhole yourself. Only you can allow people to put you in a box. I am who I am. I care about what I care about. I'm strong in my convictions. I dictate my future. I dictate my outcome. Deportation, what happened to my family, is a sliver of who I am and what has happened to me. I have much more to say, much more to contribute.

Q6: *In 2015 you were named to the Obama administration's inaugural class of Presidential Ambassadors for Citizenship and Naturalization, which aimed to promote naturalization among some 8 million qualified people. But some immigration groups have called Barack Obama the "deporter in chief." How is what's happening now under President Donald Trump different from what happened under the previous administration?*

GUERRERO: The rhetoric isn't the same. Look, the Obama administration deported



People need each other. They need their families. That's what the American dream is all about.



a lot of families, but Obama also tried to implement immigration reform, and he was shut down. He didn't have the Senate and the House. He tried to enact an executive order and it was blocked by the courts. He was on his own. I understand that. I'm not at all saying that separating families is okay. He just didn't have the support.

Q7: *Your advocacy includes volunteering with the Immigrant Legal Resource Center and sitting on the board of directors of Mi Familia Vota, an organization that promotes civic engagement. What does common-sense immigration reform look like to you?*

GUERRERO: We update the visa system. Have we tried to set up a path to citizenship for people who are here, who have been here for years and who have supported the economy? No. Reform involves repealing laws that are hurting people. It means coming up with ways to keep our borders secure but which also create a new way forward. It does not mean deporting 11 million people and collapsing our economy. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is a relatively new thing. We don't need ICE. We don't need another agency going after families, putting them in jail solely to have higher body counts in these centers. We don't need to be putting money into this agency. Immigration is not a crime.

A lot of immigrant families are taken advantage of because we don't know our rights. I joined the Immigrant Legal Resource Center because it focuses on education. As soon as I educated myself, I felt more powerful. I could give information to folks and direct them in a healthier way. Compare that to my parents, who hired the first bozo who offered to help them with their visas. The immigration system is convoluted and made for people to misunderstand. I just try to be a portal for information and get it out there to the folks who need it.

Q8: *Speaking of ICE, in August, on the first day of school, authorities arrested 680 people suspected of working in the country illegally across seven Mississippi food-processing plants. Videos of children crying made the rounds online and sparked debates about coverage of this issue. Some argue that it's important for the public to see this kind of imagery. Others deem it exploitative and a form of trauma porn. What's your take?*

GUERRERO: People need to see it. Honestly, it was the first time I saw an image of what I felt like the day I came home and my folks weren't there. I don't know if I felt validated, because it's difficult

saying that; I know these kids are suffering. But I felt like that's what I've been trying to tell people. That's what it feels like. It's your first day of school. You love your parents. You wish they were there with you. We need to continue sharing images like those. I go through a lot not having my parents here. They're getting older. I'm getting older. I'm missing a lot of their milestones, and they're missing mine. That stunts your growth, in a way. People need each other. They need their families. That's what the fucking American dream is all about.

Q9: *Do you still believe in the American dream?*

GUERRERO: Of course. There are so many great things about this country and so many opportunities to be had. Equality for all and justice for all: That's the American dream I want to live, where everyone is treated fairly, where families are able to stay together, where this country provides what it promises for all families — not just white families and the families at the top. That's what I'm working toward. I mean, what else am I going to do?

Q10: *Is it possible for your parents to come back to the U.S. legally?*

GUERRERO: I would love for them to. This is where it all began. This is where our life started, and I would like to finish it here with them.

Q11: *You play Crazy Jane on DC's TV series Doom Patrol, whose second season premieres on HBO Max this spring. Crazy Jane experiences childhood trauma and develops superpowers as a result. What superpowers have you developed?*

GUERRERO: Becoming someone else. Here's an example: In college, I told someone that my parents were business owners, that they were in Colombia on a business venture and I was just here studying political science because I was interested in social justice and wanted to become a lawyer. The real reason I wanted to become a lawyer was so I could bring my parents back. In terms of relating to Jane, when she allows herself to work with others and surrender to community, she finds light in that. It's similar to when I surrender to my feelings and working with others and my community.

Q12: *Have you ever felt tokenized in your career?*

GUERRERO: Yeah, in auditions for "Drug Dealer Girlfriend Number One" and "Maid Number Two." That still happens. That's why being on Doom Patrol and getting the role of Crazy Jane has meant so much to me. To have a Latinx land a role normally reserved for a white person?

Latinxs aren't allowed to be superheroes. It's the strangest thing that we can't be seen in fantasy situations. Only white people can be in fantasies? Only white people can be superheroes? That's fucking preposterous.

Q13: *Crazy Jane also has dissociative identity disorder. There aren't many pop-culture representations of mental health issues in Latinx communities. You've struggled with depression, right?*

GUERRERO: Hey, we have mental health issues. This happens in our community. This needs to be looked at. If that goes overlooked, that person is going to spend a long time trying to figure it out. Who knows where they may or may not end up? What if my parents had seen a show or movie where they talked about that? We are so informed by what we watch and what's out there and available to us. That's why we have to fight to be in these spaces.

Q14: *Describe a moment when you realized what it means to be Latinx in Hollywood.*

GUERRERO: I mean, just go out there and try to get a job. Get a job, and then try to get paid as much as your counterparts. That's when you realize you're not on the same playing field. Or you think you have an opportunity to work with a producer who says they're interested in your story, or interested in telling more immigration stories or stories that impact the Latinx community, and then you get an e-mail from this person and it starts with, "Hey, babe." That's when you realize, "Oh, I am a woman. I am a brown woman." This is still going on, and that's still something I have to fight.

Q15: *Singing, not acting, was your introduction to performing. What does music signify to you?*

GUERRERO: It's how I stay alive, man. I love singing. I haven't done it in a professional setting yet, but it's coming. Music has saved me. It's the way I connect to my ancestry, to my family Every Sunday, my family used to put on music, clear out the furniture and dance in the living room. What those songs were saying meant something.

Q16: *Like many Latinx people born in the 1980s, you listened to a lot of Selena growing up. What does she represent to you?*

GUERRERO: She represented the new Latin American, right? A person who was connected to her culture and could express herself so deeply but could also be very American — a mash-up of two beautiful things. It's what I've always considered myself: a mashup of everything wonderful. I could speak Spanish. I could enjoy all these beauties that my culture offered, like music, dance, food and language. But I could also enjoy American music, American food and American customs. I could fucking bring those all together and just be a superhero.

Q17: *What's your favorite Selena song?*

GUERRERO: "No Me Queda Más," of course. The most intense, just mad emo song.

Q18: *You've said that growing up you tried to be the good girl to the point of harming yourself if you thought you were sinning. You're now perceived to be a sex symbol. When did you embrace your sexuality?*

GUERRERO: It wasn't until very recently. I've always been sexual, but it was once something I tried to hide because I was afraid of falling into the stereotype of the sexualized Latina who thought she could get anywhere with her sexuality or fuck her way out of any situation. I have been able to fuck myself out of a couple of situations, but that is not my go-to. My go-to is my brain and my heart and what I've learned from my family and community. That is how I've gotten ahead.

Q19: *Do you feel your activism has ever been discounted because of your sex appeal?*

GUERRERO: Latinas especially are not allowed to be sexual and smart at the same time. It wasn't until after I wrote my book that I allowed myself to feel sexy and say, "Fuck it. I don't care what you say about my breasts. I don't care about what you say about how I look." Being comfortable with my sexuality is a part of me and in the message I want to give to people about loving themselves. It all goes into how I felt about my brown skin growing up, feeling that it was ugly or less than. "A wide nose — your indigenous nose — is ugly. Your brown eyes aren't as interesting as blue ones." Shut off the noise that tells you you're not good enough or white enough, that your sexy is bad, that your sexy is crass in some way.

Q20: *When do you feel most alive?*

GUERRERO: When I'm singing or dancing. When I'm experiencing music through my veins. When I'm eating my mother's food. When those beans hit my mouth and just, I know what that is. It's life, you know? A life force for the heart. ■

CLASSIC CARTOONS

"You got it. I'm only visiting ERA states this year."

"Frankly, Brother Dominick, your case appears to be without precedent, but it is unlikely that you can remain a monk."

"This year, I'm just giving fruitcake and vibrators."

"How about a little Germaine Greer for a change?"

"You should be making as much as the pope!"

"But I don't want to meet a tall dark man. How about a tall blonde woman?"

IRYNA
IVANOVA

Model @PLAYMATEIRYNA

Photography by @OHRANGUTANG
Agent / Publicist INTRIGUE MANAGEMENT | @INTRIGUEAGENCY
PR LSA PUBLICATIONS | @LEO.ALDERMAN @LSAPUBLICATIONS

Describe yourself in three words...
Big Boobie Russian Girl...that can't count.

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
Absolutely. And trust me, it ain't easy to get this Resting Bitch Face excited.

What was it like starting out as a model?
It was easy... I was like... how can I shoot the sexiest fucking pics that exist on the internet, so I get all the followers on @playmateiryna? I know, I will just use my big boobies, lol. Then I created my Celeb.tv/playmateiryna page and converted my millions of IG followers to paying fans and got rich. That's how you do it

What would you consider to be your biggest challenge as a model so far?
Rating one million dick pics on a scale from 1-10. I have developed Elon Musk-level multitasking.

Describe your perfect day off when you are not modelling?
It would be to walk down the street in my boobiest, low-cut top, cause car accidents and fuck up marriages. Then go home and watch Family Guy. Lol.

Name three things on your bucket list?
* Ludacris, for just one time. And he has to be singing "Ho" on loop until I'm done.
* Maldives.
* Mars.

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?
Antarctica. It's a good fit for my personality.

Do you have a secret talent?
Many. Just go to Celeb.tv/playmateiryna to find out.

A guilty pleasure?
Sex with celebrities.

Which song is absolutely certain to make you cry whenever you hear it?
Baby Shark

What is your favourite word in any language and what does it mean?
"Net". It means "No" in Russian.

What is your greatest life achievement thus far?
Bringing myself from poverty in post-soviet Russia to earning $1,000,000+ every year using Celeb.tv and social media.

THE ART OF

ATTENTION

From injecting a sharecropper into a college kickoff to turning the Nike swoosh on its head, Hank Willis Thomas uses staples of America's ethos to comment on its inequities

BY **HENRI NEUENDORF**

Hank Willis Thomas is traveling.

This time he's in Oregon to install the first major retrospective of his work, at the Portland Art Museum. On view through January 12, 2020, the exhibit will travel to Arkansas in February and Cincinnati in July. It's a major achievement for the 43-year-old artist, a career milestone he has worked up to ever since earning his MFA from California College of the Arts in 2004. Throughout his career, Thomas has developed a reputation as one of America's most versatile and outspoken artists, using photography, sculpture, video and collaborative public art projects to raise awareness about social justice and civil rights. That range might stem, in part, from what Thomas calls "some form of ADHD."

"When I look at my survey show, it's like, Oh wow, that's definitely a broad spectrum of work," he says. "I've always hoped that people can see the connections."

A black artist who draws extensively on advertising, nostalgia and other outgrowths of pop culture, Thomas keeps his Brooklyn studio lined with shelves of meticulously organized boxes packed with back issues of iconic black-culture magazines such as *Ebony* and *Jet*, as well as retro campaign buttons and other source material. His early photographic work suggests that the collective consciousness of any society is reflected in its advertising. The poignant 2003 series *Branded*, for example, features photographs of black men marked with the Nike swoosh logo to comment on the relationships among advertising, race and consumerism.

Thomas has also explored popular entertainment, using the spectacle of professional sports as a metaphor for racism, corruption and violence. *The Cotton Bowl*, from his 2011 photo series *Strange Fruit*, juxtaposes images of a sharecropper and a black football player. The pairing serves to expose the similarities between African slaves, whose unpaid labor made generations of white Americans wealthy, and the descendants of slaves, whose unpaid work on college football teams enriches the mostly white executives of the billion-dollar sports-entertainment industry.

His sculptural pieces are no less politically charged. *We the People*, from 2015, uses patterned tapestries woven from decommissioned prison uniforms as a thinly veiled criticism of a criminal justice system that disproportionately incarcerates minorities and people of color. His 2014 sculpture *Raise Up*, which features cast-bronze figures reaching for the sky, was created in response to the killing of unarmed black men at the hands of police and is now a permanent part of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama. (The Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim and, internationally, the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia have also acquired his work.)

Speaking on the phone ahead of the Portland exhibit's opening, Thomas explains that he felt compelled to be an artist, and it's easy to see why. His mother, Deborah Willis, is a renowned photographer, a MacArthur "genius" grant recipient, a Guggenheim Fellow and current professor and chair of the Department of Photography & Imaging at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. "I can only imagine that the conversations around the dinner table must have been really interesting," says Jack Shainman, Thomas's New York dealer. "I think Hank is much further along in terms of evolution and race than a lot of us, just because he grew up in a household that was always discussing that."

Influenced by his mother's exploration of truth and reality, the artist's early work, such as his 1997 photo series *A Thousand Words*..., focuses on how the framing of images can influence context and how their meaning changes depending on what's included or left out of the frame.

A terrifying crime proved to be a turning point in Thomas's life and career. The artist's cousin, Songha Willis, was murdered during a violent robbery in Philadelphia in February 2000. In the aftermath, Thomas's resolve crystallized. "When my cousin was murdered, I felt I needed to make art that could change the world in a more intentional way," he says.

The killing inspired Thomas to focus his energy on addressing social issues. At the same time, a rapidly changing

Opening pages: Crossroads 2012, digital c-print and plexi with Lumisty film, in collaboration with Sanford Biggers. **Right:** Raise Up 2014, bronze. **Below:** The Cotton Bowl, 2011, digital c-print

technological landscape encouraged the trained photographer to broaden his perspective. "Most of the technical things I learned, like processing film and printing, became irrelevant," he says. "All I was left with was a way of looking at and critiquing images, so a lot of my work moved away from taking the perfect picture and toward reconsidering and reframing historical images. It has kind of taken me from photography to painting to video to sculpture to social practice."

The importance of Thomas's work, according to Julia Dolan, co-curator of the Portland show, lies in the way he excavates the past to make sense of the present. "The way he addresses the founding issues of this country is so critical to the dialogue we're having on a national scale today," she says. "We are often surprised by how his work dealing with race and bias becomes more and more relevant. He really thinks about structures in society that hold folks down, hold folks back and privilege some over others."

At a time when activism and civic engagement can be fashionable and superficial, Thomas has proven himself a uniquely active participant in the civic life within and beyond his own community. "I realized there are a lot of noncreative people shaping our reality and designing policies and laws that aren't creative," Thomas says. "And there are a lot of creative people who have abdicated their responsibility in shaping the narratives that our culture is founded on."

In 2018, For Freedoms, a super PAC Thomas founded in 2016 with his friend and collaborator Eric Gottesman, worked with

Left: We the People, 2015, quilt made out of decommissioned prison uniforms **Opposite page:** Your Skin Has the Power to Protect You, 2008, LightJet print

more than 100 artists—including JR, Marilyn Minter, Rashid Johnson, Tania Bruguera and Theaster Gates—to take over nearly 200 billboards across all 50 states, as well as D.C. and Puerto Rico. Artists were asked to pick an issue they cared about and make a statement that could help viewers see the world in a new light.

"Working with artists is like herding feral cats, and I say that as an artist myself," Gottesman jokes. "It was ambitious, exciting and on a scale nobody has ever really done before."

Thomas also serves on the New York City Public Design Commission, an 11-member panel of experts appointed by the mayor, which reviews permanent architecture, landscape architecture and art proposals for city-owned property. According to the New York Post, Thomas was a vocal advocate for replacing a number of Central Park public monuments of men with those of women. "These decisions that have shaped our lives have been made by urban planners and policy makers for centuries," he says. "Who is important? Who deserves to be seen, and who doesn't?"

The same questions are being raised by art institutions and a fine art industry that has excluded minorities and women for decades. This is starting to change. But like most change in the rigidly conservative art world, it's happening slowly. A 2018 study conducted by Artnet News and the art blog In Other Words found that just 2.3 percent of all artwork acquired (either by purchase or through donation) by 30 U.S. museums from 2008 to 2018 has been by African Americans, and that African American artists make up a mere 1.2 percent of global auction sales. These startling figures illustrate the critical role artists such as Thomas play in increasing the visibility of black artists — within both the American institutional landscape and the international marketplace for contemporary art.

Thomas's personal stance toward equality in the art world is not quite what his politically charged work suggests. "There are always people who are excluded and exploited," he acknowledges, "and we all need to be wide awake to our participation in ignoring important things and people." However, he continues, "the more interesting stuff always happens outside the mainstream conversation, and so I don't think we should all be rushing so quickly to be accepted by the status quo. I do recognize that I am now part of the status quo, and I have a responsibility to improve it. That includes working hard toward greater inclusion and knowing that the work is never over."

For all his enthusiasm for civic engagement and civil rights — both in his work and in his activism —Thomas's chosen mediums and conceptually rigorous approach translate into market prices that fall below those of many other artists of his generation.

Left: I Am Amen., 2009, Liquitex on canvas **Opposite page:** Branded Head, 2003, Lambda photograph

In the art world, an artist's auction record can be a reliable barometer of the market's demand for their work. Artists who work across fewer mediums and approach their craft from a more decorative or colorful perspective — such as Johnson, Kehinde Wiley (who painted Barack Obama's official portrait) and Mickalene Thomas — have all achieved higher auction prices than Thomas. The highest-ever price paid for a work by Wiley is $300,000; Mickalene Thomas's top price is nearly $700,000; and Johnson's high mark stands at $1.16 million. In contrast, Thomas's auction record is $75,000.

Shainman points out that sales aren't necessarily an indicator of quality or importance, explaining that photographs and editions, which account for the majority of Thomas's work, tend to be priced lower than original paintings.

"In order for an artist to be successful today, the work has to be about ideas and also be interesting aesthetically," Shainman says. "Hank is able to balance these two things and merge them to make pieces that don't look like anybody else's — which is really important today too, since there have been so many artists who have come before us."

Grammy-winning hip-hop producer Swizz Beatz has been a collector of Thomas's work since 2018. "I first saw his amazing work online, and it was so epic," he says via e-mail. "At first sight, what grabbed me was the bold and artistic expressions in his work. Hank is a leader, a teacher, and super forwardthinking when it comes to culture and politics. I've seen Hank's growth; he's made many new big steps, and I'm super proud of him in so many ways. I feel that Hank is reflective of the future of the arts now."

Thomas's busy upcoming year is likely to give his market a boost. Asked about the demand for his work, he's ambivalent, explaining that prices "are not an actual tangible indicator of value per se." But, he admits, "we've been trained to value things that are more expensive, so when you make something people think is expensive, it automatically becomes historic and important."

Much of Thomas's work puts its metaphorical finger directly into the wound and urges its viewers to engage in difficult conversations; presumably this particular brand of candor doesn't sit well with many art collectors, who are disproportionately white. But the artist has no plans to make his work more palatable for the market. "I only know how to be me," he says. "I don't separate my art from my life."

While Thomas's outspokenness is a key part of his role as an artist, it has gotten him into trouble too. In September 2018, South African photographer Graeme Williams accused the American artist of copying his photograph of black schoolchildren and white police officers, an image that became a symbol of the end of apartheid. Speaking to The Guardian, Williams insisted that the changes in Thomas's whited-out version were "minimal" and accused the artist of "theft, plagiarism [and] appropriation."

Responding to the accusations, Thomas asks, "How do we in the age of mass and digital reproduction talk about history and visual culture?" He adds, "In books you can put quotation marks around words, attribute it to someone, and it's okay." In

At a time when civic engagement can be fashionable, Thomas has proven himself a uniquely active participant.

visual art, he argues, notions of authorship and the lines between appropriation and plagiarism are much harder to trace.

Perhaps this blurring of authorial boundaries is related to his willingness to collaborate. Thomas readily admits that much of his creative process is brainstormed, delegated and outsourced to historians, fabricators, writers, graphic designers and illustrators. "I think of myself more like an art director than a traditional fine artist," he says. This is more common than it sounds. Like Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael and many of the masters who came before them, contemporary artists including Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons and Yayoi Kusama maintain large workshops and studios in order to meet market demand.

Dolan says Thomas's collaborative instinct stems from his essential human curiosity. "He's very interested in what other people think," she says. "He really wants to hear others and understand how they see the world to explore how his perceptions might be helped, changed or enhanced by listening and collaborating."

Thomas's inquisitive nature and dizzying range ultimately serve a dual purpose perfectly summed up by Gottesman, his friend for almost 20 years.

"I think he's aware of the power of attention. That's really what his work is all about," Gottesman says. "It's about criticizing how attention is garnered by larger forces in society. So on a personal level he's always trying to bring other people in and bring new voices into the conversation."

LOVE
OVER
RULES

Opposite page: Love Over Rules 2018, neon **Above:** Jungle Fever, 1991–2007 LightJet print, original photographer unknown **Right:** Guernica, 2016, mixed media with sports jerseys

PLAYMATE

KELSEY

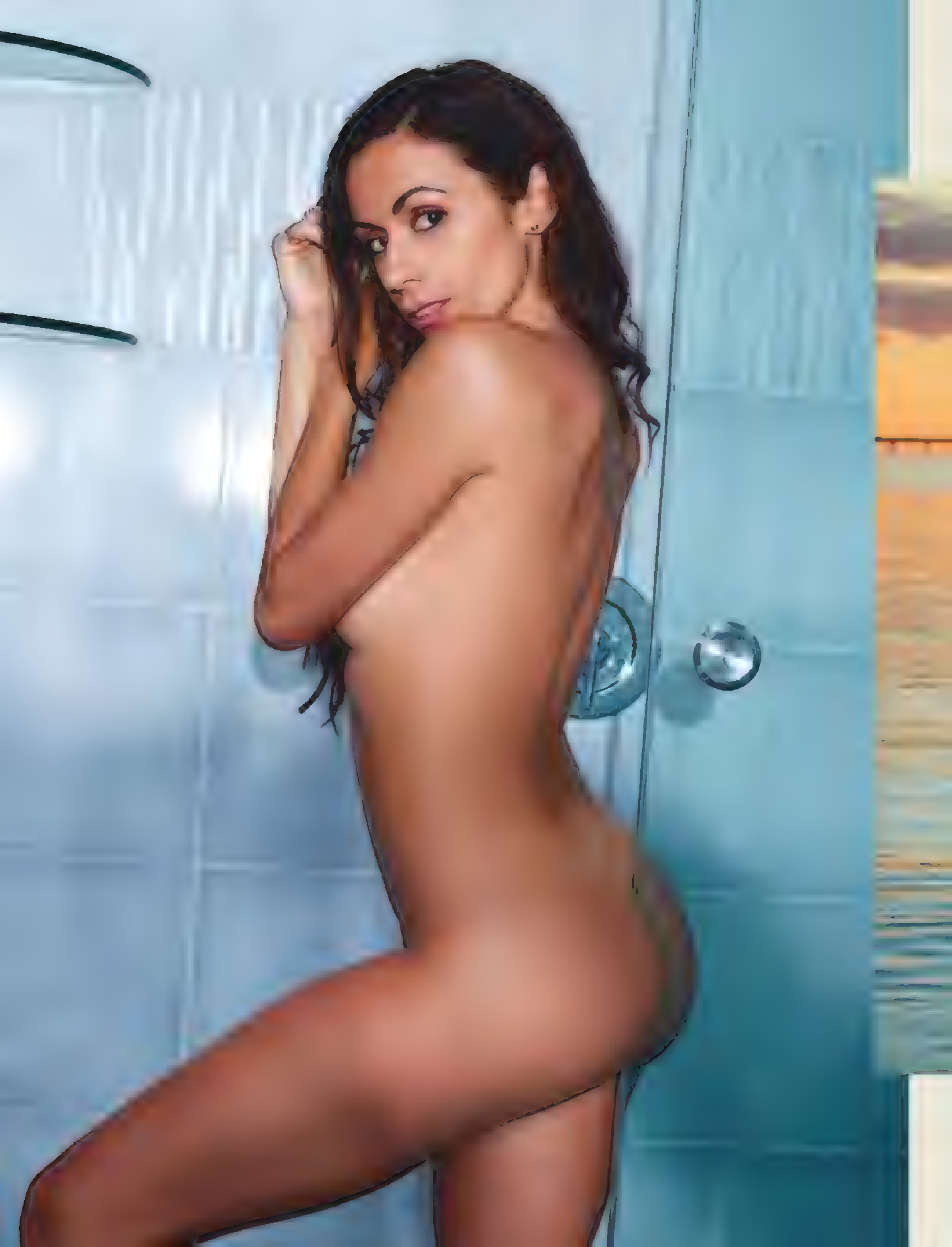
Frances

PLAYMATE

Tell us something surprising about you?
I've always been the wild child, maybe because I'm a Gemini, or maybe cause I just love a good challenge... so from 2012-2014 I spontaneously enlisted in the Israeli Defence Forces and served as a combat soldier in the Air Force. Does that make me crazy? I'll let you be the judge.

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
Is that a serious question?! YES! I have wanted to be in Playboy since I found my dad's stash under my parents' bed when I was 14. I thought it was so freeing to see women who felt confident, sexy and in control of their body, but hey, here we are, and I honestly never would've expected it.

What inspires you?
Meeting new people from all around the world and hearing their stories always inspires me in new ways, it's why I'm so obsessed with traveling. Taking risks inspires me to challenge myself and knowing that it will be hard or unsure of what the outcome will be I am able to push myself to new limits. I'm also inspired by the people I surround myself with and the simple things in everyday life that motivate me to work harder, be better and smile often.



Why did you choose to pursue a career in modelling?
Honestly, I would say it's more of a side job. I love sharing my adventures with the world on social media and inspiring others to stop contemplating and start letting go of their fears by going on that trip they always talked about, trying that weird food on the menu, or even fall in love with someone halfway across the world but most importantly give zero f"cks about what people will say while doing it. Inspiring others to explore the world is more the career I intend to pursue and getting paid to pose for photos along the way is just an added bonus.

Who do you look up to in the modelling industry?
Sara Underwood is my dream girl. She encompasses all the aspects of a free-spirited nature lover who posts the sexiest pics in the most jaw dropping locations. This is the exact vibe I go for when planning photo shoots. And we both rep the Pacific Northwest!

What are some of your hobbies?
Being a foodie, I'm a damn good Hungarian food chef (thanks to my mama) and a taco connoisseur. I also love camping, hiking and kicking my brothers asses in Call of Duty. My absolute favourite thing to do though is travel. So far I have been to 40 countries. If you asked me my top three places I would say Oman, Philippines and Sri Lanka (where I am currently sitting and writing this as the sun goes down over the Indian Ocean).

Name three things on your bucket list?
1. Pose for Playboy... Check
2. Explore every national park in the US with a camper van I built myself
3. Visit every country in the world

Turn-ons
I love someone who is adventurous and spontaneous. I love when they are confident and dominant (also in the bedroom) but still know how to properly snuggle and cook me a delicious dinner on a Friday night. Someone who can laugh at my jokes and be weird with me. A nice smile, and attentiveness to their mental and physical health.

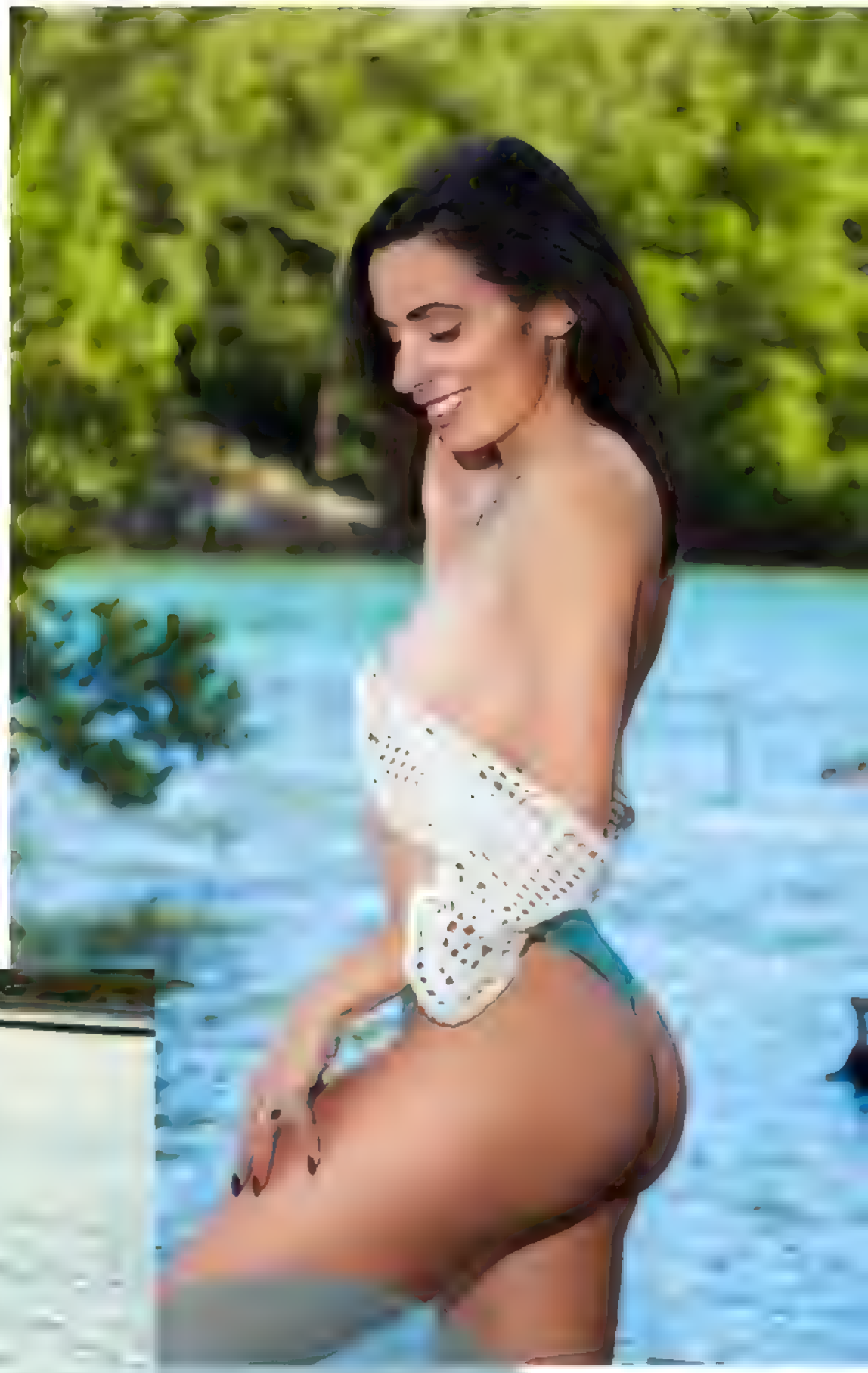
PLAYMATE

Turn-offs
Someone who is lazy and unmotivated, doesn't like spending time with my family or want my dog sleeping in the bed with us. Someone who believes chivalry is dead and doesn't treat me like a princess. If they don't know how to kiss, you can bet I won't take anything further than that.

Describe to us your perfect date
Camping in the mountains, cooking dinner on the campfire, drinking red wine, and listening to Lord Huron while snuggling under the stars with my dog... and I guess my date can join.

Which world capital would you most like to visit, and why?
As a country girl I would much prefer a small village off the beaten path somewhere like in Tibet or Argentina, for example. I would rather travel to less touristy countries that people haven't heard of and park my ass in the middle of nowhere in nature for a while.

What is your mantra?
Life's short, keep it wild



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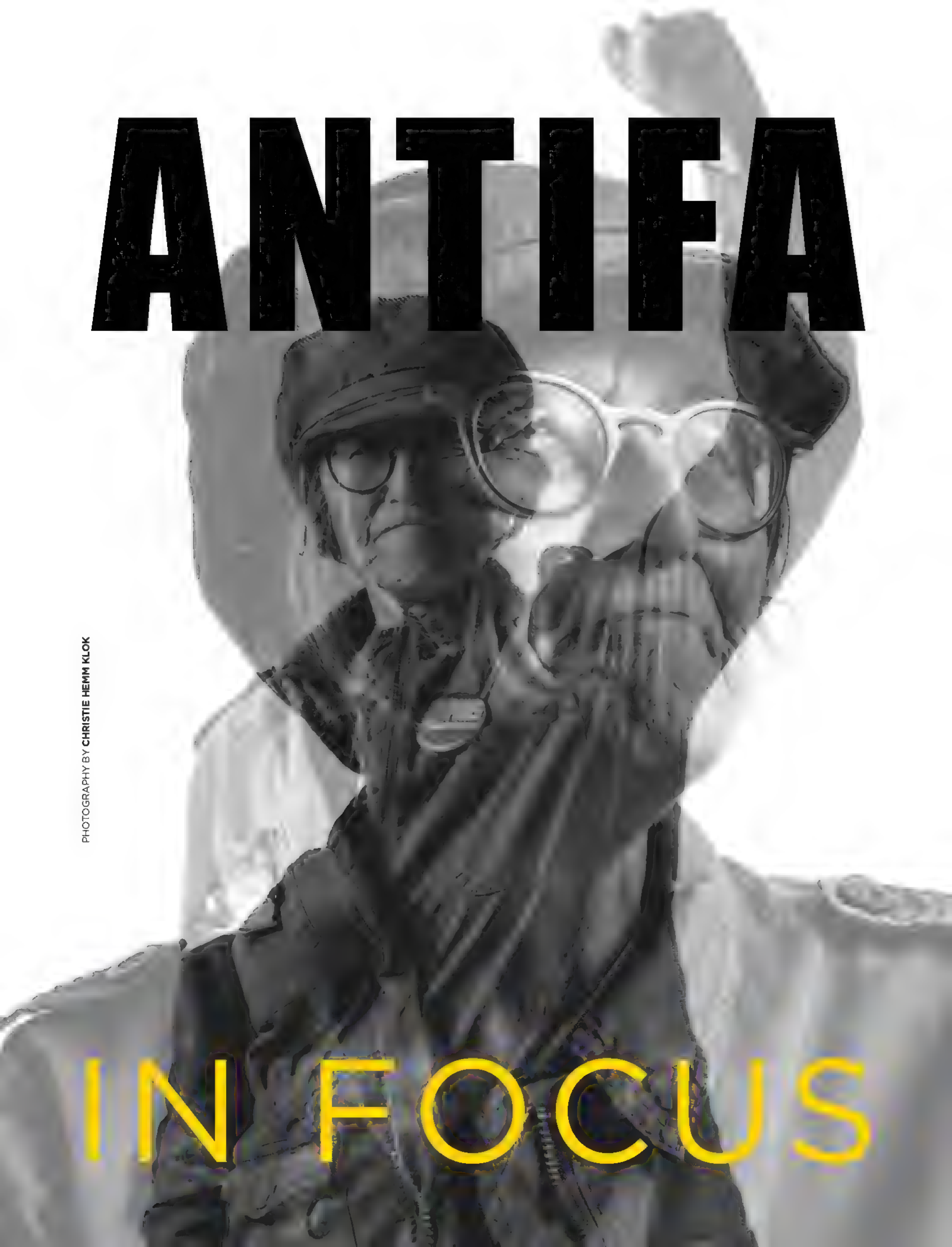


PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CHRISTIE HEMM KLOK**

IN FOCUS

A rare look inside America's antifascist movement—the people, the methods and the struggle to find a clear voice in a deafening world

BY **DONOVAN FARLEY**

When I call Gregory McKelvey and Kathryn Stevens, they're in the midst of an alternately quiet and cacophonous Saturday afternoon typical to young parents. The Portland, Oregon–based pair, interracial and in their late 20s, plan to be married next year. Thankful one of their two babies is asleep, Stevens breast-feeds the other during our interview. Neither parent comes across as a domestic terrorist.

But McKelvey and Stevens are involved with antifa — a decentralized network of leftists representing various belief systems and tactics, united only in their opposition to nationalists and white supremacists — and as such they inhabit the same category as the Unabomber and Timothy McVeigh. Or they would, if senators Ted Cruz and Bill Cassidy had succeeded last summer in designating the movement a domestic terrorist group. (Regarding the senators' efforts, President Trump tweeted, "Major consideration is being given to naming ANTIFA an 'ORGANIZATION OF TERROR.' ")

McKelvey tells me that despite frequent threats to his family, showing up for antifa actions is something he and Stevens feel they must do. "I think it helps people to see a successful family defending antifascists, because those people often can't defend themselves."

Stevens adds, "When it was just Greg and me, it was easier to say, 'Threaten us all you want. I'm not scared of you.' But now, with two babies, it's not okay at all. I haven't hurt anybody, and I have no intention of hurting anyone, so why would you threaten my family? It's solely because of our political beliefs."

Perhaps the problem lies in pinpointing what those beliefs are, how the movement acts on them and whom the movement consists of in the first place.

That confusion has often led to fear and anger, exacerbated by antifascists' use of anonymity as a defense against arrest and doxxing — though doxxing is also one of antifa's tactics. Notwithstanding recent efforts to raise this shroud of secrecy, including non-anonymous interviews with outlets such as *Rolling Stone* (and this one), anonymity has allowed a group of loosely connected activists to be demonized by members of the far right and, increasingly, centrists and moderate Democrats. As we stagger toward the 2020 election, antifa finds itself at a crossroads: Can it succeed, or even survive, without taking up the very tools its opponents have wielded to such ruthless effect?

• • •

I've studied Portland's antifa community since it came to prominence in the wake of the 2016 election, and I've reported on several protests and actions in that time. I can't claim total impartiality, in large part because many of my friends and neighbors are involved in the movement, but I can say I've observed antifa's victories and dysfunctions at close range. It's the movement's unique position in American culture — how it works, how it's perceived and the gaping blind spot between the two — that I've set out to explore.

For this story I interviewed a dozen or so antifa activists, who gave me new insights into the range of their methods, from electoral campaigns to, yes,

street confrontations. Although monitoring far-right groups online is a crucial part of the movement's work, I'm more interested in its public-facing efforts — the attempts to puncture the antifa stereotype, reveal the sprawling community beneath and loudly voice the message uniting them all: Hate requires active and direct confrontation.

But learning more about antifa requires a treacherous journey through its internal and external challenges. And you can't get a more potent demonstration of those challenges than a string of events, briefly violent and wholly absurd, that unfolded last summer.

On May 1, 2019, writer, Twitter personality and occasional Fox News commentator Andy Ngo was videotaped by an undercover antifascist who had embedded with the far-right organization Patriot Prayer. (A Portland grand jury later used the video to indict several Patriot Prayer members.) In it, Ngo appears to smile while others make plans to attack a Portland cidery known to be an antifa hangout. According to reports, the ensuing incident left a woman with a broken vertebra after a man hit her with a baton. Ngo would then dox the injured woman as she lay in the hospital; she reportedly awoke to a cavalcade of death threats.

For this, plus previous instances of what some consider Islamophobia and misinformation on his social accounts, Ngo became fair game in the minds of some antifascists. (In an op-ed, he pushed back against the allegations of Islamophobia.) On June 29, at a Portland rally organized by Patriot Prayer, he was punched and kicked by antifascists in black clothes and masks, who then stole the stunned writer's GoPro. Overnight, Ngo morphed from a fringe figure to a national sympathy case who received nearly $195,000 from a GoFundMe organized by conservative commentator Michelle Malkin.

If only that were the end of the story.

The rally landed at the end of Pride Month, and the antifa group PopMob (short for Popular Mobilization) had organized a massive dance party for queer people and their allies to oppose the Proud Boys and other organizations that had joined in with Patriot Prayer. In a move reminiscent of recent antifascist actions in the U.K., PopMob decided to bring vegan coconut milkshakes. Antifa activists hit Ngo with multiple shakes, and Portland police, acting on a tip, tweeted, "Police have received information that some of the milkshakes thrown today during the demonstration contained quick-drying cement." This tweet, which at press time is still on the department's official Twitter page and has more than 13,000 retweets and 25,000 likes, has yet to be substantiated by a single piece of evidence.

"We definitely weren't advocating throwing them at people," says Effie Baum, a fourth-year graduate student and member of PopMob, "but we weren't naive enough to think it might not happen." Baum, who uses they/them pronouns, laughs tiredly at the suggestion that the shakes contained any sort of hardening agent. They point out, as many have, that PopMob would have been risking the murder of hundreds of people had they laced the drinks. This did not stop Fox News from reporting that "the so-called 'milkshakes' reportedly contained quick-drying cement, pepper spray and raw eggs." The attention resulted in Baum receiving hundreds of violent threats from around the country.

It's no surprise that the Ngo incident played well with the Fox audience, but CNN's Jake Tapper took it upon himself to retweet a video of Ngo post-punch with the caption "Antifa regularly attacks journalists; it's reprehensible." (The "attacks" he posted included an egg being tossed, a camera cord being cut and University of Virginia students yelling at a journalist.) Tapper's colleague John Berman invited Ngo on his show. Neither anchor brought up Ngo's history of posting false or misleading statements on his Twitter account.

So—an attempt at peaceful protest was compromised by a moment of violence at

the hands of ostensible allies; that violence was pounced on by the opposition and swiftly turned into a narrative that was amplified by law enforcement and major media outlets.

The antifascists involved didn't have the media apparatus in place to combat the disinformation (though Baum tried), and a major opportunity to correct the record — to proclaim that antifa is not a pack of extremist hooligans — was lost in a fog of tweets and sound bites.

• • •

The antifascist activists I interviewed for this piece are eager to change the perception of the movement and spoke with me knowing they would receive torrents of threats for doing so. The vast majority of antifascist work consists, they tell me, not of black masks, street clashes and weaponized milkshakes but of behind-the-scenes organizing and countless hours spent observing far-right communication channels.

People who do antifascist work are not, by and large, participants in the so-called black bloc, whose masks and sometimes aggressive presence at rallies are a magnet for media attention Antifascists are doctors, parents and baristas. They're your neighbors. There are so many grandmothers involved in antifascist actions in Portland alone that they have their own organization, complete with monthly meetings and a Facebook page. At the Occupy ICE PDX protests last June, directly in front of federal agents dressed in riot gear and holding rifles sat a row of grannies. One of them was knitting.

So why has antifascism become demonized by the right and shunned by the left? Much of the answer lies in the movement's anonymity and disdain for figureheads. Groups like Patriot Prayer and the Proud Boys, along with their admirers in the media and Washington, D.C., have cultivated a stable of big personalities and a knack for messaging that has served them well under President Trump, allowing them to shape their own narrative and that of antifascism. In the social-media age, when information (and misinformation) travels the world in the blink of an eye, the messaging effort is often as important as the message itself. It's not enough to be on the right side of history; you have to be on the right side of those reading and writing that history. While the far right has flourished, antifascists have painted themselves into a lonely corner by shunning the press and the centrist public.

"Going out in the streets is only about 10 percent of what we do."

Lucky for them, the press isn't the only tool at their disposal.

"I feel a responsibility to change the public discourse around antifascism, absolutely," says Sarah Iannarone, a 2020 candidate for mayor of Portland. (Her campaign is helmed by McKelvey.) Iannarone is a mother who has spent her professional life trying to make urban spaces greener and more livable, often traveling the world to discuss policy. She's aware that her open support of antifascism will mark her for threats and violence — and possibly cost her political capital — but she feels duty-bound to the cause.

"Our society's lack of awareness and understanding of the issue is extremely disappointing to me," she says. "Because this problem exists within the system, it's important we use radical tactics — though I definitely think electoral politics matter, and that's why I'm running."

Iannarone's belief that antifascism should engage with mainstream politics is shared by many of the activists I interviewed; it's one of the reasons they spoke openly with me. These attitudes represent a shift in tactics within a movement that has traditionally been suspicious of the electoral process. Along with a nascent openness to the press, this approach could go a long way toward correcting the rampant misinformation against them.

PopMob's Baum represents a more counterintuitive strain of the "radical tactics" Iannarone mentioned. Over the past year, PopMob and its allies have sought to combat both the far right's endeavors and antifa's messaging problems through resistance theatrics, using marching bands to drown out loudspeakers and recently launching the "Banana Bloc," wherein roughly 40 activists dressed in banana suits and armed with brass instruments led a parade of about 100 people to protest a Proud Boys rally.

Baum points to community building and organizing as PopMob's central aim. In March 2019, after a series of attacks befell Portland's LGBTQ community, PopMob rapidly put together an event attended by about 600 people, featuring self-defense and community-awareness lessons. The organizers handed out more than 1,000 whistles, flashlights and self-defense key chains.

"I volunteered because I wanted to change attitudes," Baum says. "Going out in the streets is only about 10 percent of what we do."

“

The people who are open about their involvement need to **change their rhetoric,** because right now we are bringing a **knife to a gunfight.”**

Opening page: Margaret "Peggy" Zebrosk . **Previous spread:** Gregory McKelvey and Kathryn Stevens **This page, clockwise from left:** Jacob Bureros, Effie Baum and Olivia Katb Smith

This page: An activ st us ng black-bloc tactics charges through a 2019 May Day rally n Paris **Opposite page:** Portland ral y in August 2019, demonstrates its take on ant fascist activism

Jacob Bureros, an activist whose participation in rallies and press ops subjects him to constant death threats, points to rarely covered community-minded work such as the aid provided to Portland's most vulnerable residents during a brutal ice storm in January 2017. Activists delivered blankets and hot meals to the city's homeless and offered transportation to shelters. After a rash of violent attacks against the homeless in 2018, antifascists set up patrols of the various homeless camps around town.

And then there's Margaret "Peggy" Zebroski, a 69-year-old retired physician's assistant and grandmother. In February 2017, Zebroski participated in a protest against the killing of Quanice Hayes, a 17-year-old African American who was fatally shot by a white Portland cop with an AR-15 after Hayes had allegedly used a toy airsoft gun in a robbery. At the protest, a Portland police officer in full riot gear, despite there being only about 50 protesters pinned Zebroski's head to the pavement with his knee, breaking her nose.

"Well, I have to tell you that for me, in the context of things, this was a pretty trivial event," Zebroski tells me. "I've been doing demonstrations since I was a teenager. I've been clubbed in the head in San Francisco during Vietnam protests. It's the police harming the elderly, and that's upsetting I get that. But we were protesting Quanice Hayes being killed. He died; I only had my nose broken."

• • •

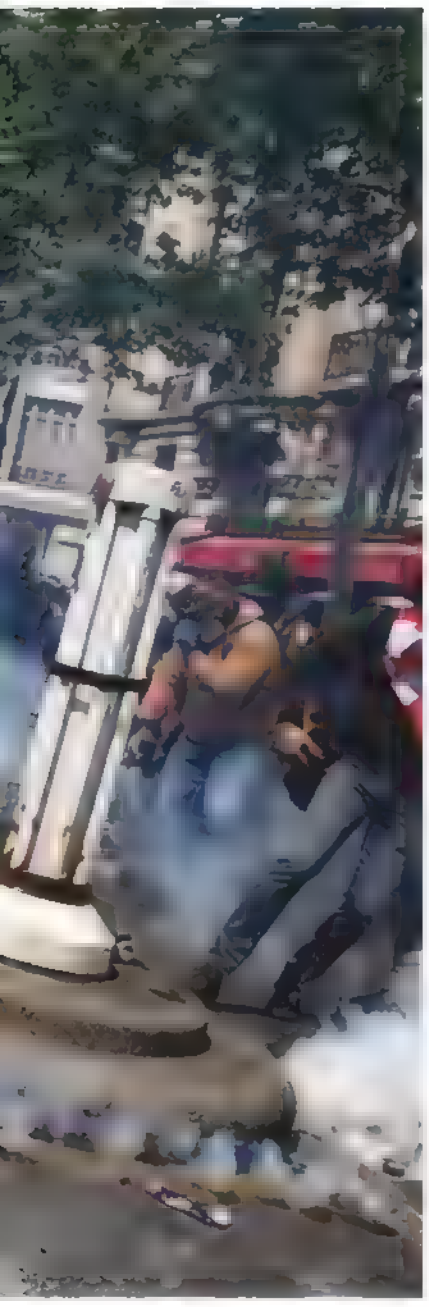
Even in the face of such ardent civil disobedience, the question of physical confrontation remains. If antifascism really favors vigilance and community building over fists, why do some of its adherents give the far right what it wants by meeting its violence with more violence? Because for better or worse, sometimes it works out in the left's favor.

David (not his real name) is a family man in his mid-30s and a member of Rose City Antifa, one of America's oldest antifascist groups. He cites Richard Spencer, the white nationalist whose fame peaked after he was punched in the face with cameras running. Spencer's assertion that the black bloc has made his allies afraid to show up to events suggests that violently confronting the far right can be an effective tactic. "If they can't find a protester in black bloc to fight," David explains, "they're going to go beat up an African American teen at a mall who is not involved in a protest whatsoever. They're going to attack somebody just walking down the street."

But the threat of violence goes beyond civilians on the far edges of the political spectrum. And for Bureros, a man of Filipino descent and a young father of two, the real danger doesn't come from the bigots in the streets.

"For all the threats I get, I'm still more afraid of the police state and what it can do," he says. "When you have police who can do whatever they want to you with impunity, that's a lot scarier."

An editorial in a 2017 issue of *Pax Centurion*, the official publication of the



Boston Police Patrolmen's Association, informed readers that, when dealing with antifascists, "the only way to defeat these savages is to fight fire with fire." The piece went on to equate antifascism with Nazism.

"The problem, of course, is with that blanket statement," says Norm Stamper, Seattle's police chief during the 1999 World Trade Organization protests, which helped give rise to Occupy Wall Street and much of the modern protest movement. (Stamper has repeatedly voiced his regrets at the heavy-handedness with which his department responded to the massive protest.) "It's just plain wrong, and it's dangerous and ridiculous to think that way.

"Law enforcement has a responsibility to protect everyone at a protest — or a counterprotest — no matter what they're saying or what they believe," he adds. "It's extremely difficult at times, but that's the job we signed up for."

Of the domestic-terrorist designation and its ties to policing, he says, "There is a fascist thread working its way through the body politic, and its head cheerleader is Donald Trump. His diehard followers would absolutely use such a designation to force law enforcement to help further their political cause, which is antithetical to what law enforcement is ostensibly all about."

Of course, quasi-fascism and *Pax Centurion* don't begin to speak for all law enforcement, and the rare instances of antifa affiliates hurling various projectiles their way are further steps away from antifa's core message. (The antifa slogan "All cops are bastards"—or ACAB—while not equivalent to *Pax Centurion*'s claims, isn't helping either.) Activists say their anger arises with good reason and that they're often left to fend for themselves when attacked. In Portland, instances of overzealous policing include shooting nonlethal rounds into crowds of peaceful protesters, resulting in devastating head injuries; charging groups of black bloc antifascists, regular citizens and journalists alike (myself included); striking civilians with batons while driving them toward downtown traffic; and disproportionately arresting leftist protesters.

Which brings us back to black bloc — a small and often messy faction but an integral one. In January 2019, Patriot Prayer attempted to storm a Democratic Socialists of America meeting at Portland's Industrial Workers of the World union office. Portland DSA co-chair Olivia Katbi Smith wasn't there that night, but she's been present for many similar Patriot Prayer–led incursions.

"It's incredibly frustrating when they do things like try to invade our meetings," Katbi Smith says. Reflecting on black bloc's greater significance, she adds, "People still wonder why we need the black bloc out there. That's exactly why. They put their bodies on the line for us."

• • •

When I ask McKelvey about the future of the movement, he replies without hesitation.

"Antifascism sure as hell has a PR problem," he says.

He goes on, and his words suggest an outline of how the movement might finally find a voice to meet that of the roaring far right: "These elements that Trump has inspired to come out of the woodwork aren't going anywhere regardless of what happens next year, so antifascists aren't either. We need to make it okay for people to say they support antifascism, including people in all levels of government. We're going to need people in the streets forever, but the people who are open about their involvement need to change their rhetoric, because right now we're bringing a knife to a gunfight."

Even if antifa coheres into a force strong enough to shift American culture away from the fears and hatred that continue to work their way into the mainstream, I can't help but think about the effect all that visibility could have on McKelvey and Stevens's family.

"Even with the kids?" I ask.

"Our kids," says Stevens, "are one of the reasons we're out there." ■

JEN

Stacey

@ JENSTACEY_

CHRISSY LITTLEFAIR INSTA | @LITTLEFAIRPHOTOGRAPHY

PUBLICATIONS | @LEO.ALDERMAN

Tell us something surprising about you?
Singing is the dream, i think i'm a professional in the shower!

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
Super excited! I'm still kind of bouncing off the walls.

What inspires you?
That would be my boys! They give my life meaning.

What would you say is your best feature?
Personality and smile.

Why did you choose to pursue a career in modelling?
I guess it's just something i've always loved.

Who do you look up to in the modelling industry?
Candice Swanepoel and Cindy Crawford have always been favourites of mine.

What are some of your hobbies?
Walking! Absolutely love it, i don't mean a little stroll i'm talking about hills and mountains.

What makes you feel sexy?
Glass of wine, classy lingerie & killer heels definitely turns me into a sexy vixen.

Turn-ons
Beautiful eyes, good personality & sense of humour

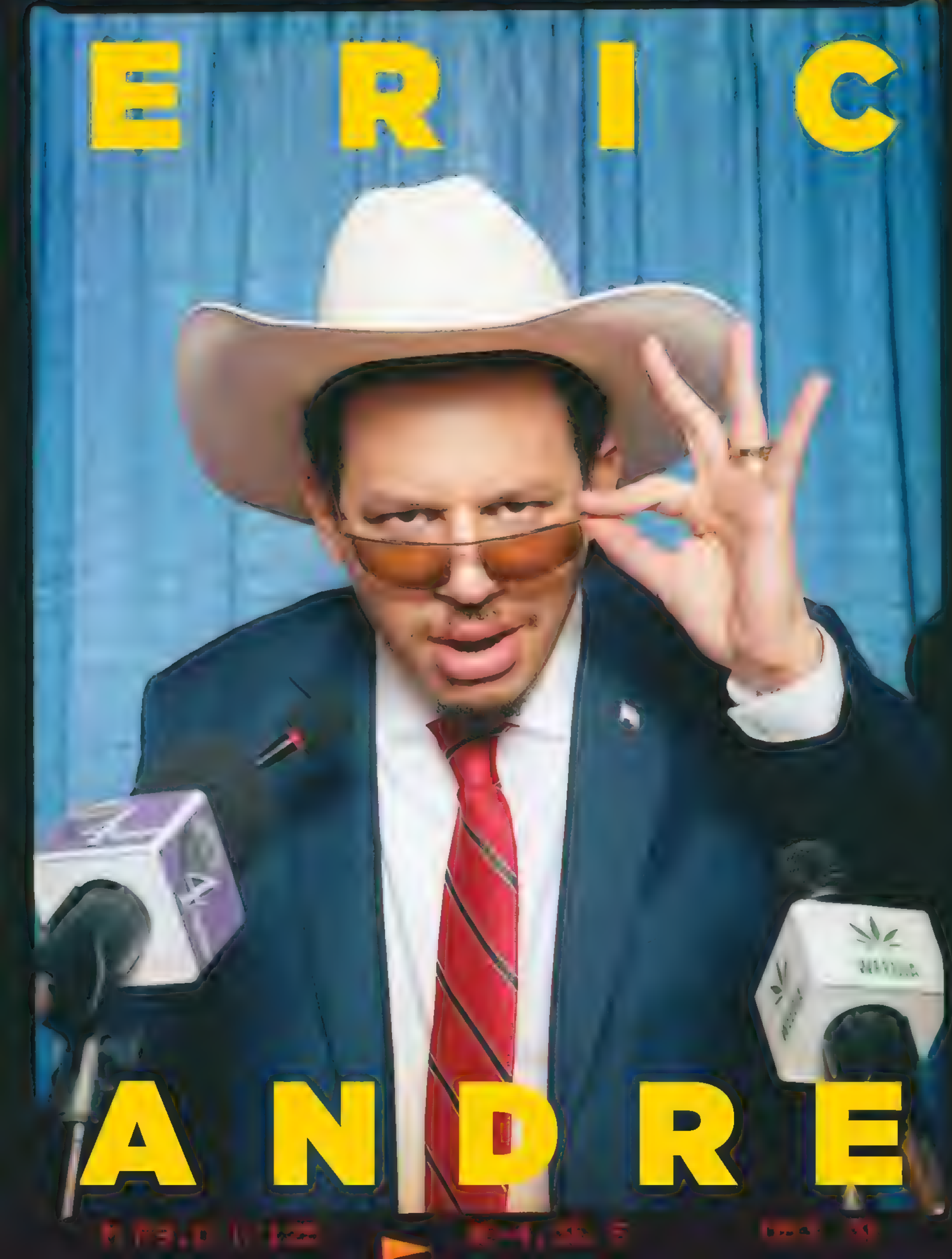
Turn-offs
Bad attitude, controlling behaviour & prudes.

Describe to us your perfect date
I like to keep things simple, a few drinks around a little beach fire watching the tide come in would be my ideal date. There's no hiding behind all the fancy stuff with me i like to see people's true personality.

What is your mantra?
Excellence does not require perfection.

400

46



FOR PRESIDENT

Introducing the Cool Party: No Policies, Just Attitude

It's about attitude, and it's about time. Eric Andre, host of Adult Swim's *The Eric Andre Show* and star of the prankbased feature film *Bad Trip*, is running for president and, like most of his fellow candidates, investing all his energy in the construction of an attention-grabbing persona. Unlike his rivals — with the exception of our actual president — the Florida- born hopeful is building his image on a platform of blatant falsehoods, below-the-belt insults and dereliction of duty. We caught up with Andre at a salon, where a manicurist buffed fake tanner off his fingernails, and adjourned to his favorite Korean barbecue restaurant. There, he ate eel and pressed the flesh (and discussed his plan to celebrate a "crystal-meth Christmas") with a few starry-eyed constituents. He also gave us a glimpse into the Cool Party campaign, Russian pee-pee tape and all. —*James Rickman*

PLAYBOY: Between Trump and Tom Steyer, we have two billionaires in the running. How's your war chest?
ANDRE: I'm a thousandaire. I've made over $3,000 in my life. I dare you to find the person who's more qualified than me. I'm making over 250 bucks a week.
PLAYBOY: Any campaign-trail highlights so far?
ANDRE: None. I'm avoiding my constituents as much as possible. I've been spending all my time at Jimmy Buffett concerts and drinking Shamrockin' Sangria at Bennigan's.
PLAYBOY: What's the change you want to see in the world?
ANDRE: I don't want to see anything. I'm going to close my eyes and let my constituents do whatever. I want to golf and sleep under my desk as much as possible. I have absolutely

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MILLICENT HAILES**

no policies. And that's my promise to the American people: I'm just about attitude and swagger.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about attitude. How do you define it?

ANDRE: Well, *Webster's* dictionary defines attitude as telling people your opponent sucks his own dick at night. I couldn't believe Webster. I was like, "Webster, you old fool! You on one!"

PLAYBOY: You've actually mentioned on the trail that your opponent "sucks his own dick at night." Do you think that's an appropriate thing for a candidate to say, and were you speaking metaphorically?

ANDRE: I think it's more appropriate now than ever. I was speaking metaphorically and literally. Furthermore, I don't know who my opponent is.

PLAYBOY: Who are you considering for your running mate?

ANDRE: Uh, Jussie Smollett, Lil' Bow Wow, John Hinckley Jr. and Papa John.

PLAYBOY: And who's going to be in your Cabinet?

ANDRE: I'm gonna pull up to a McDonald's at three in the morning in an abandoned school bus and just put a bunch of ding dongs onto the fuckin' bus and give them total autonomy.

PLAYBOY: You reported from the Republican and the Democratic conventions in 2016 ——

ANDRE: That's how I got the politics bug.

PLAYBOY: Did those experiences inform your decision to run for president?

ANDRE: Yeah. I was like, Politics is easier than comedy. It's like comedy, but you don't have the pressure of telling jokes; you just get up there and complain about shit and dupe people into thinking you're going to do something while a few oligarchs control everything.

PLAYBOY: Where do you stand on legalization?

ANDRE: Legalization? Of everything? I'm all for it. I mean, doesn't matter to me. Whoever gives me the most money to get into office, I'll do whatever they want. I'm going to be pretty drunk on power. And schnapps.

PLAYBOY: What would you legalize first?

ANDRE: OxyContin. [*burps*] Excuse me. That's on the record, by the way. That's going in the anals [sic] of history.

PLAYBOY: What about climate change? [*Andre bursts into laughter*] Is it real, and if so what do you plan to do about it?

ANDRE: Wait till those polar ice caps melt, then surf the gnarliest fuckin' tsunami, dude! Right into the Surf Olympics.

PLAYBOY: What's your relationship with the mainstream media?

ANDRE: I don't own a TV and I can't read. I have no relationship with it.

PLAYBOY: We've seen the rise of social media as a political tool. Do you plan on running your own accounts?

ANDRE: I will at first, but I plan on getting hacked so that when I go on a bigoted diatribe and accidentally retweet my porn searches, I'll have an excuse to fall back on and an intern to scapegoat, Ted Cruz–style. He was favoriting porn Twitter accounts, and then he was like [*grunts*], "Uh, my intern did that!" And he still beat the guy from the Mars Volta.

PLAYBOY: Of course, Senator Cruz isn't the only politician who's had to deal with embarrassing leaked documents. Do you anticipate any problems there?

ANDRE: The only problem is figuring out when to release my sex tape, my Russian hooker pee-pee tape, my masturbation tape and my taking-a-dump-on-my-desk tape. [*A constituent at a nearby table offers Andre a glass of beer*] Oh, no thank you. I'm detoxing. I'm going straightedge for two months. And then it's crystal meth come Christmastime. It'll be a crystal-meth Christmas!

PLAYBOY: Presidents Trump, Clinton and Kennedy, to name a few, have gotten into trouble for alleged affairs. Do you anticipate past infidelities being a problem for you?

ANDRE: I anticipate them being a solution. Tax dollars will be spent on my personal sexual needs — with transients, drifters and freight-train-ridin' hobos with their lunch on a bandanna hanging off the end of a stick.

PLAYBOY: What do you hope to accomplish in your first 100 days as president?

ANDRE: Oh, getting out of work as much as possible. I won't even move to Washington, D.C. I'll just do a Ferris Bueller: buy a mannequin and a cantaloupe, paint my face on it and put it on marionette ropes in the Oval Office. I'll have a recording of Ronald Reagan snoring so people think I'm at my desk.

PLAYBOY: What are your thoughts on God?

ANDRE: Not a damn thing. I worship Satan, I practice the dark arts, and I own a Ouija board.

PLAYBOY: Is the Ouija board going to factor into your decisionmaking as president?

ANDRE: Yeah. If I'm president, I'm going to throw pagan menstrual blood at Stonehenge. That's how I'll pick my winning lottery numbers.

PLAYBOY: What's your message to the children of America?

ANDRE: Don't listen to your parents. They're fuckin' out to get you, man. They're out to kill your buzz, bro.

PLAYBOY: And finally, are you concerned that the demands and exposure that come with the job will affect your family?

ANDRE: I don't know. [pauses] Leave me alone! That'd be great if someone was on the campaign trail and just kept saying, *"Leave me alone!"*

I'M GOING TO BE PRETTY DRUNK ON POWER. AND SCHNAPPS.

IN THE YEAR 2120, ONE MAN LOOKED INTO THE FUTURE AND SAW ONLY DOOM.

BUT THAT MAN, THE EARTH'S RICHEST, "SELF-MADE" MULTITRILLIONAIRE MICAH VEERMAN, HAD A VISION:

V.M.S. FRUTATION

VEERTECH

LEAVE THE DYING EARTH BEHIND AND TAKE HUMANITY'S FUTURE INTO HIS OWN HANDS...AMONG THE STARS!

GAZILLIONAIRE: 7120

by MATT LUBCHANSKY

COMMANDER'S LOG
JANUARY 14, 7120 CE
AWOKEN FROM STASIS

SHIP'S AI HAS FINALLY DETECTED A PLANET WITH HABITABLE CONDITIONS

HAVE TAKEN LANDER TO SURFACE TO ASSESS WHETHER THE PLANET, WHICH I'VE CHRISTENED VEERMANIUM, IS A GOOD HOME FOR SEED DNA — MINE

PLANET VEERMANIUM APPEARS TO HAVE INHABITANTS

GREETINGS! I AM A TRAVELER -- FROM BEYOND THE STARS!

THEY SEEM RECEPTIVE TO MY PRESENCE — I FORESEE RISING HIGH IN THIS PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 3. I'M BEING SHOWN AROUND SOME SORT OF FESTIVAL. MY CONCERNS ARE MOUNTING.

I CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE: WHAT...*GENDER* IS EVERYONE?

IT WOULD HELP ME IN THAT REGARD IF YOU ALL WOULD WEAR SOME *CLOTHING*...

I'M SORRY, MICAHVEERMAN, THAT WORD ISN'T COMING THROUGH OUR TRANSLATORS. *JENNDERR?*

HMM. AND I'M NOT SEEING ANYONE *PAY* FOR ANYTHING.

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

AM BEGINNING TO SUSPECT THIS SOCIETY IS EVEN MORE PRIMITIVE THAN I THOUGHT.

WHAT'S THE VALUE OF ONE OF THESE THINGS?

VRRRRR

THEY MOST LIKELY NEED MY STRONG HAND.

VALLYEW? YOU MAY HAVE THE [illegible] IF YOU'D LIKE. ALL WANTS ARE ACCOUNTED FOR HERE!

VRR VRR

CLAP CLAP CLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCL

IT'S *VERY* PLEASURABLE. SEE, MICAHVEERMAN?

FOR MINE IS THE VERY HAND OF THE FREE MARKET.

VRRR

NO!

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT OR WHO IS *WORTH MORE?* AND GOD, WHERE'S YOUR *SHAME?!*

OH, I SEE...YOU ARE REFERRING TO ヒ@ﾚﾌｺ@ｷ;ﾌ... HMM...

PANT PANT

IT'S POSSIBLE THEIR SPEECH IS JUST MIMICRY...

PERHAPS THE TRANSLATORS ARE BROKEN...

EITHER WAY, THEIR LITTLE THOUGHTS ARE *ADORABLE.*

WE ARE SORRY. YOU MAY BE MORE SUITED FOR THE ｺﾆ@ﾆｷﾋo22.

THE WHAT...?

CLIK!

SIGH...

PUT THEM WITH THE *OTHERS.*

HEY! I DON'T DESERVE THIS!

DON'T YOU KNOW *WHO I AM?*

CAPTAIN'S LOG. DATE UNKNOWN.
MY SITUATION HAS CHANGED FOR
WHAT I ASSUME IS THE BETTER.

PAFF!

SO...DO *YOU GUYS* THINK YOU NEED A *PRESIDENT?*

CEO...?

END

LUBCHANSKY

Calvin Klein

ARIEL atwood

Model @ARIELATWOOD

Photography by JESTON BRANDON | @PERFECTLYFLAWLESSPHOTO
MUA @NICHELLEMUA

Tell us something surprising about you?
I've only been modeling for a year, and full-time modeling even less. I went straight from getting my Degree of Public Relations to posing for Playboy. Who would've thought!

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
Excited is an understatement, overjoyed! It felt like a childhood dream coming true (because it was!).

What inspires you?
So many things inspire me. I think to put it simply, beauty inspires me. The beauty in following your dreams. The beauty of being courageous. The beauty in never backing down. The beauty in discovering your own strength. The beauty in the birds, in the human body, in the stars. My inspiration really falls endless.

Why did you choose to pursue a career in modelling?
I was like - why not? I grew up dreaming of being in Playboy and other magazines. I had the realization I could maybe make that dream a reality. I had my education under my belt which was my first priority, did a couple shoots, fell in love and never looked back.

Who do you look up to in the modelling industry?
Brooks Nader and Haley Kalil, some of Sports-Illustrated finests. Total babes!

What are some of your hobbies?
I love getting outside and going on hikes whenever I can. Also, I'm a big reader and love learning about esoteric topics.

Name three things on your bucket list?
Sky-diving, seeing the Northern Lights and learning Spanish.

Turn-ons
Teasing and pleasing. I love sexy, fun foreplay and a man that knows how to please and isn't afraid to get handsy.

Turn-offs
Someone not confident enough to handle me and take charge.

Describe to us your perfect date
A perfect date to me would entail a beautiful walk by some water, dinner over sunset and then relaxing, watching the stars and to make it perfect; the night would definitely end with lots of fun.

Which world capital would you most like to visit, and why?
I've been fortunate enough to have traveled lots already! The next world capital I'm most excited about visiting though is Athens, Greece!

What is your mantra?
Everything is working out in my favor, because it is!

a very millennial scandal

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **KANYA IWANA**

Sex, nudes and social media took down the woman who represented a moderate future for Democrats. Now she's ready to stand up again, freer than ever

BY **ANITA LITTLE**

In early October, in the quiet commuter town of Santa Clarita, California, I spent a balmy afternoon with then congresswoman Katie Hill. It was exactly two weeks before intimate photos of her began to trickle out of the dark, far-right corners of the internet and about three weeks before she would announce her resignation.

At that time, this story was shaping up to be very different from the one you're about to read. I would shadow Hill, a Democrat, throughout the valley she calls home, giving an inside look at the challenges young women face when they enter the political sphere. I would observe the bright, shiny parts, such as Hill meeting special-education students at a local elementary school, giving a commencement address at a college and attending a charity fund-raiser for children with cancer. I would hear tip-of-the-iceberg hints of her struggles, such as fighting to speak without being interrupted at a Chamber of Commerce meeting and being told to smile more by constituents. I wasn't expecting anything to twist the arc I had already outlined of a millennial woman ascending to the halls of power.

Then, on October 17, I received a call from a staffer who sounded harried, asking that I refrain from mentioning in the piece Hill's ongoing divorce from Kenny Heslep, her partner of nearly 10 years. It was implied he had become increasingly volatile. I felt apprehensive after the call; I sensed something was coming but wasn't sure what it might be.

The next day, the conservative site Red- State published a blog post detailing a consensual polyamourous affair the congresswoman and Heslep had had with a campaign staffer. The post also included a nude photo of Hill. It was soon followed by a piece in the British tabloid Daily Mail, where more photos were released. They spread across social media like wildfire —just as multiple literal fires were raging across southern California.

"We found out they had 700 more files," Hill would later tell me over the phone. "I just didn't know how long this was going to go on, or what else they were going to have, or how I was going to be able to do the work that mattered to people in my district."

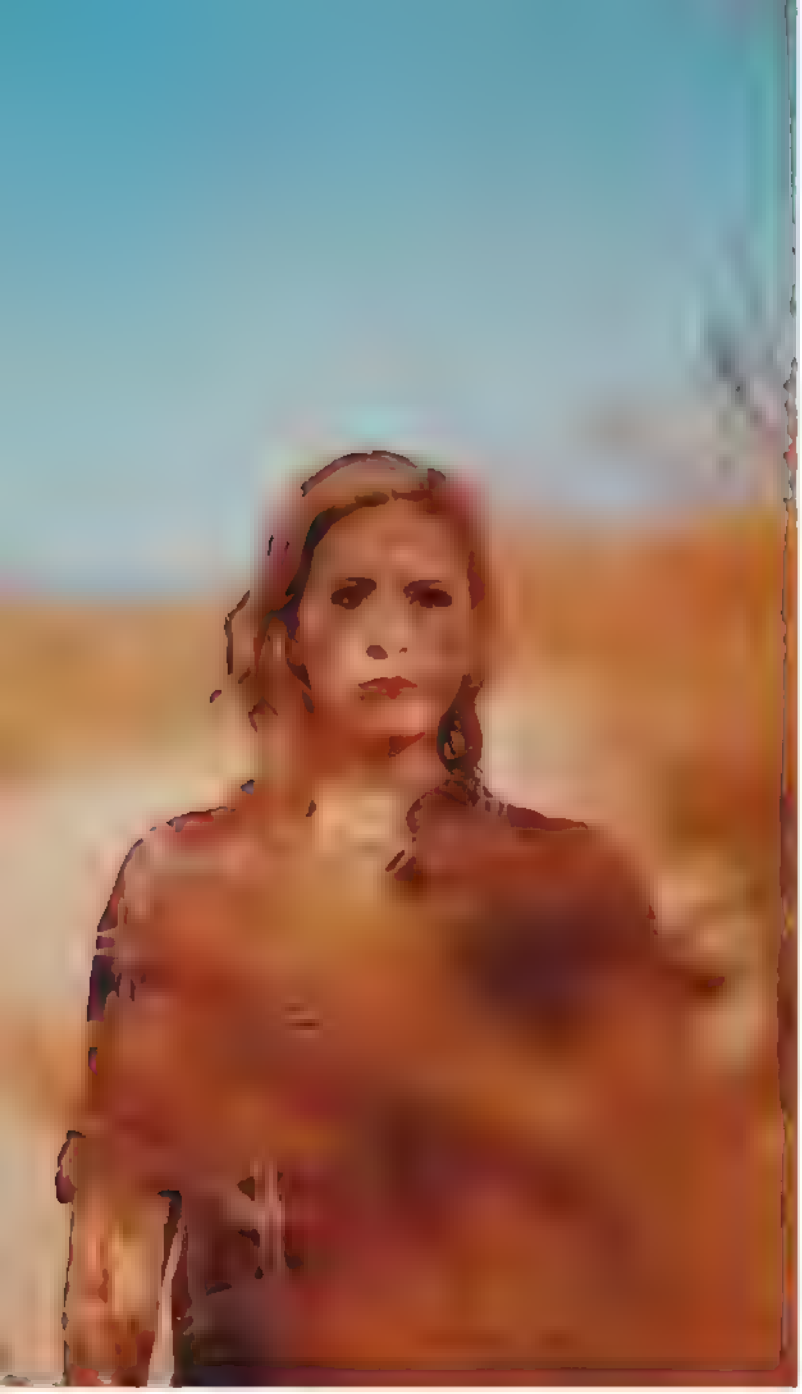
Suddenly, a story that was supposed to be straightforward was radioactive. No one knew how to address this uniquely millennial "sex scandal," and few wanted to touch it. A local assemblyperson who had agreed to be interviewed backed out. A member of Congress whom I'd already spoken to scrambled to retract their statements. On-the-record sources quickly became background or off the record completely. By the time I filed, Hill had given her farewell address from the floor of the House of Representatives, and Heslep, according to his father, had denied leaking the images, claiming he'd been hacked. I watched in real time as

Hill's freshman promise was taken down in a dazzling conflagration that could only exist at the intersection of sex, power and technology. Hill was part of a great new hope, a wave of young progressives who had been ushered into the 116th Congress in the aftermath of Hillary Clinton's presidential loss in 2016. Her underdog campaign was proof of the resilience and resourcefulness of millennials — proof that when we fight, we can sometimes win.

For Hill's generation in particular, her ousting sparks a special kind of dread; it feels either very familiar or very possible. Millennials are the internet generation, after all. As Republican congressman Matt Gaetz suggested in a tweet amid the scandal, who among us would look good if a vengeful ex-lover shared every intimate photo or text? In this brave new digital world, lapses in judgment and moments of abandon are forever catalogued, waiting to be deployed should someone ever come into power or just happen to be a woman.

"I hate that they won. I hate that I did end up quitting, but the GOP made it clear that they were going to continue this until I quit," Hill says.

By the time this profile hits newsstands, I imagine people will likely have come to their own conclusions. So this isn't just a story about Katie Hill the victim of alleged revenge porn, or Katie Hill the hashtagged



cautionary tale. This is about Katie Hill the congresswoman — the Katie Hill her 700,000 constituents lost when she was driven out by cyber exploitation. And this is about Katie Hill the survivor.

• • •

The first time I formally met Hill was in her Santa Clarita office. The space was sparsely decorated save for a few framed photographs, one of which was of the nearby Vasquez Rocks. Hill occupied offices across the 25th Congressional District, about a half hour north of Los Angeles and comprising the cities of Santa Clarita, Palmdale, Lancaster and Simi Valley.

Hill has a direct manner of speaking that some might describe as brusque. She often wears a severe, unflappable expression that has been referred to as "resting bitch face," otherwise known as "a face" on men. She walks at a fleet-footed pace, opting to take the stairs whenever she can; as a public official, she never had time to exercise. In a different world these characteristics would be genderless, but during her time as a candidate and then a congresswoman, they took on a weight she often found exasperating.

"You instantly have criticism about every single bit of your attire, your face, your makeup, your hair," she said, gesturing toward the tightly secured bun sitting atop her head.

When the now 32-year-old Hill unseated Republican incumbent Steve Knight in November 2018 in a hotly contested race, the win made national headlines. Someone who never thought she would be a politician was thrust into a spotlight that felt all the more blinding because she was a woman and even more so because she was openly bisexual and the first LGBTQ congresswoman from California. This was no small feat in a district where Proposition 8, the same-sex-marriage ban, had passed overwhelmingly just a decade earlier.

Hill recalled other LGBTQ representatives advising her to pass as straight. "They said, 'You're married to a man. Why would you come out as bi?' "

In the year following her election, the former nonprofit director spent her days shuttling back and forth across her district and the country. Spending more than half her time in Washington, D.C., Hill turned into a nomad in her hometown — the place where she learned to ride a horse, experienced young love and suffered through the requisite ill-advised bob cut of late girlhood. The confusion that accompanies such a lifestyle shift became evident when she mistakenly referred to Washington as her home before catching herself. "I'm literally on a plane, on an average week, for 12 hours," she told me.

A closer look at the district she represents reveals communities that are so disparate, it's astounding she engaged enough voters to pull off a win. There's upper-middle-class Santa Clarita with its beloved Six Flags Magic Mountain theme park; the high-desert cities of Palmdale and Lancaster with their growing Latino populations; and traditionally conservative Simi Valley, a bedroom community for Los Angeles County police. Hill mentions the 1992 trial there of the LAPD officers charged with use of excessive force during their arrest of Rodney King — and the L.A. riots following their acquittal.

The demographics of the district are difficult to thumbnail, but so is Hill. She's a gun owner, an outspoken member of the LGBTQ community, a goat farmer, a sexual-assault survivor, a proud community college graduate and the daughter of a cop who cast his first vote for a Democrat when she ran.

As I trailed Hill through an average day in the district, attending speaking engagements and meetings at places that ranged from a virtually all-white country club to the diverse California Institute of the Arts campus to a majority minority trade school, I witnessed her seamlessly navigate the different enclaves. For the college visit she sported a T-shirt and jeans. Upon arriving at Valencia Country Club for a Chamber of Commerce town hall and spotting a DRESS CODE ENFORCED stencil on a window, she grabbed a suit from a staffer's car kept on hand for just such an occasion.

Besides the code-switching required of any politician who represents a district as mixed as the 25th, Hill's biggest challenge was translating to her constituents the work she does on Capitol Hill — namely, her push for affordable housing and health care reform. In an age of fringe politics, she often comes across as a kitchen-table moderate.

"When the two most commonly known names are Donald Trump and AOC, and people tend to associate an entire group with one or the other, I don't think that's necessarily healthy," she said. "A lot of what's happening in the middle, which is the majority of the country, is not amplified."

I asked Hill if the ascent of Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez as the most recognizable face of the Democratic Party had led to misperceptions. She replied that some people have the responsibility to "push us as far as we can go," but it's not usually a reflection of where the party currently leans.

"Her policies are the extreme of our party," she added of Ocasio-Cortez. "People have associated that the Democrats want to have the Green New

Deal, right? But they don't know that we also have all these other, more immediately achievable solutions to addressing climate change."

Hill's pragmatic progressivism was what made her stand out in a divided Congress and what our political landscape will sorely miss with her resignation. Following her win in 2018, she quickly built a reputation as a bridge, with D.C. outlets touting her unusual ability to cross the aisle. She represented something Capitol Hill has lacked since Republicans won back the House during Barack Obama's first term.

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On the afternoon of our first interview in October, Hill asked if she could hitch a ride with me back home. I assumed she meant the three-acre Agua Dulce ranch she once shared with her former partner. Instead she directed us to a quiet residential street in Santa Clarita lined with craftsman houses. As we pulled into the driveway, a German shepherd named Thaddeus bounded up to greet Hill, followed by her mother.

In the midst of her divorce from Heslep, the politician whose campaign Vice News termed "the most millennial ever" was doing a very millennial thing: moving back in with her parents.

Unlike most citizens, Hill didn't have the luxury of riding out the tough moments of divorce in private. As soon as she was elected one of the 435 representatives in the House, her life became openly dissected and derided for all who disagreed with her political affiliations.

"It's a weird thing, that you have to navigate being public, because it is public, right? He filed, and it was immediately picked up in the media," she told me at the time.

Hill is unsure if she'll ever consider marriage again. In light of everything that has unfolded, it would be short-sighted to assume her career didn't factor into the end of her relationship.

"If I want to be good in this role, I will not be in a position of ever putting someone else's needs first," she said. "In the pyramid of things, it's going to be my constituents, then myself, to be able to live. And then your partner comes after that."

I didn't ask about Heslep again.

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Three days after her resignation, I call Hill as she prepares to leave Washington, vowing to take her battle "outside the halls of Congress" in a heartfelt video posted on Twitter. The crisis is still fresh, the hurt still raw, and she hasn't had time to reflect. She hasn't spoken to other reporters yet, and she preemptively apologizes if she sounds "mildly incoherent."

Hill tells me a few freshmen members of Congress are planning something for her that

This is a true threat. This is its own form of assault."

evening. Her voice cracks as she struggles to find the words to describe it, perhaps wanting to avoid "good-bye party" or anything that feels final. Sighing, she settles on "little get-together."

She has been actively steering clear of Capitol Hill, lying low for security reasons, to dodge reporters and because "emotionally, it's been pretty tough."

She worries about other young women and girls who may decide not to run for public office after witnessing what she went through. Regardless of the relationship with her campaign staffer, her fate was decided by the photographs — not because of a consensual polyamorous relationship. If not for the proliferation of these images, it's likely Hill would still be in office.

"That's the thing I'm most concerned about," she says. "There's a whole generation of us who have pictures that could be compromising. It's normal, right? It's not even, 'Oh, it's so salacious.' Everybody does it."

In Hill's case, the photos were published without her consent or knowledge, but the average millennial would barely bat an eyelash at the willing exchange of such images — emphasis on willing. A 2017 study from the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative found that roughly one in eight participants had been either victims of or threatened with "nonconsensual pornography." Our nation's laws are fighting to keep up: Forty-six states, Washington, D.C. and the U.S. territory of Guam have passed legislation that criminalizes the publication of revenge porn.

Hill, who worked in the nonprofit sector before running for Congress, plans to partner with an advocacy organization to raise awareness of the havoc revenge porn can wreak. "The emotional trauma that it causes people is pretty much untold. This is a true threat. This is its own form of assault," she says.

Hill wasn't the only one who faced harassment with the release of the photos; staffers in her congressional and district offices had to field an onslaught of offensive phone calls.

"They'll talk to the staff and be like, 'Will you tell Katie Hill I want in on one of the threesomes she's having, but also she should get a boob job?' "

Ultimately, it wasn't sensational headlines or harassment on social media that prompted her decision to resign. It was her mother's advice.

"She said to me, 'You've done a ton, and you're going to be able to do more, but at the end of the day, you don't have to put yourself through this. You're young.' She always sees me as her daughter first, and she saw how awful it was."

Hill says her mom frequently sends her inspirational memes, the saccharine kind many of our boomer-age mothers exchange on the social media graveyard of Facebook. After our call, she forwards me one her mother shared with her when she was considering resignation.

"When something goes wrong in your life, just yell 'plot twist' and move on," shouts the digital pep talk in a funky font.

Hill, who admits that she could be more appreciative of her parents, seems comforted by these words.

"This is a big plot twist, so let's see what the character makes of it," she says. "That's my job."

Before we end the call, I ask whether, despite everything that has happened to her, she might consider running for political office again. I brace for a measured no — an echo of what we've heard from other female politicians cheated out of an elected position, such as Stacey Abrams and even Hillary Clinton. She replies, "Obviously, I'm going to need some time away, but it's almost something I want to do on principle."

She suggests there might be some freedom in having her private life tossed out into the world. With no skeletons left to uncover, she could become unassailable.

"Every single bit of my dirty laundry will be out there — the most private things I didn't ever think would come out. I'll be quite literally fully exposed to the voters," she says with a laugh. "So judge me for what I've got."

She finishes the thought: "This was a chapter that was important and that meant something. I think I have a legacy that is going to matter. This is just the beginning." And with that, her very milliennial political scandal ends with an ageless political message: hope. ■

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